JUNE 1967

Commentary

VOLUME FORTY-THREE, NUMBER SIX

THE SHAPE OF AMERICAN POLITICS
Richard N. Goodwin

JERUSALEM & ATHENS
Leo Strauss

ON COWARDICE
Paul Theroux

THE "YELLOW PERIL" REVISITED
Ronald Steel

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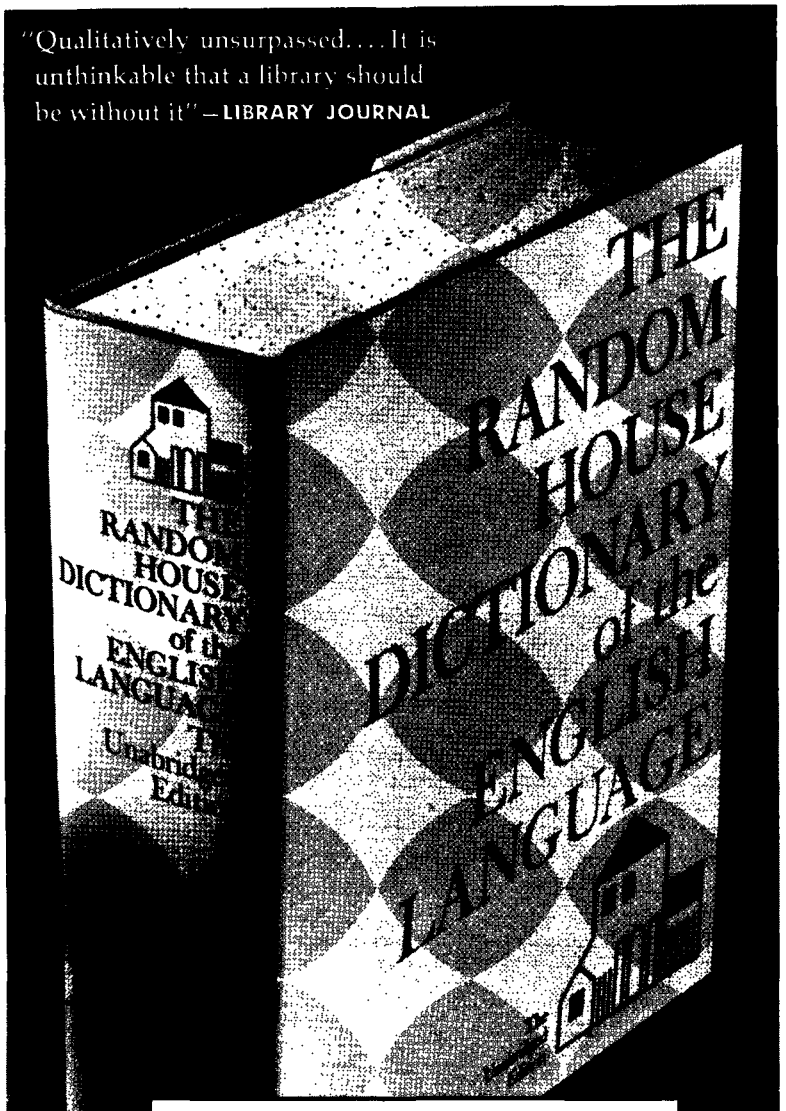

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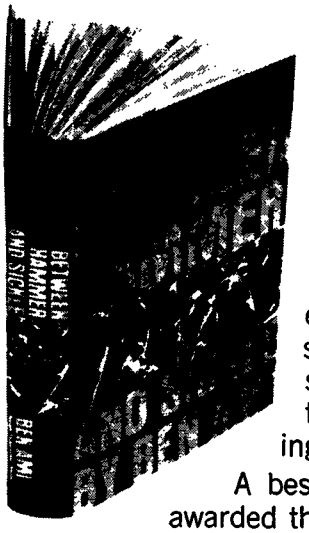

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LETTERS FROM READERS

The Moynihan Report

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

This is . . . to congratulate you on publishing Daniel P. Moynihan's piece ["The President and the Negro: the Moment Lost," February]. It is superb, and badly—very badly—needed saying. . . .

CHARLES E. SILBERMAN
Chairman
The Carnegie Study of the Education of Educators
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The dramatic and ambiguous document that came to be known—with remarkable speed—as the "Moynihan Report," included a generous selection of unimpeachable, time-tested facts, and a set of oversimplified interpretations couched in rather fevered rhetoric. . . . It was to these extravagant and portentous interpretations that most criticism was directed.

Your readers deserve to know that no one quarreled with the "facts" (though some objected to tendentious selection of data). And no one accused Moynihan of racism. (What I did say was that the Report might "encourage, no doubt unintentionally, a new form of subtle racism . . . ," and I would submit that subsequent events have justified my fears.) Nor did any critic suggest that it wasn't "nice" to mention broken Negro families and high Negro illegitimacy ratios, . . . These are all false issues, never raised by anyone but Moynihan. . . .

The basic issue has always been a simple one: how do we analyze the causes of racial inequality and order these causes in terms of importance? . . . To put it baldly, Moynihan's critics considered his analysis wrongheaded and inadequate. Not his facts; not his racial attitudes; not his discretion—his analysis.

Moynihan settled on family disorganization (as measured grossly by such indices as broken marriages, illegitimacy ratios, and fatherless households) as the basic weakness of the Negro community and said that, until this defect was corrected, Negroes would not be able to take advantage of legal avenues to equality. Now, fatherless families are indeed more prevalent among Negroes than among whites. As Moynihan has shown very clearly, this is one consequence of the oppression of the Negro, and no responsible person would dismiss it as unimportant. There are many such consequences, including poor health, inadequate education, and certain forms of social deviance. The crucial question, however, is how do we order these factors. . . .

Such things as illness, illiteracy, membership in a large fatherless family, living in overcrowded slum tenements, and other consequences of discrimination, do help to maintain the imprisonment of the Negro in poverty and powerlessness. But it is Alice-in-Wonderland logic to elevate these *consequences* to the first rank of *causes,* to be dealt with as the primary targets in the effort to end inequality. For one thing, it leads inescapably to the very kind of "service strategy" that I join Moynihan in deploring. . . .

Programs to improve family stability (Negro *and* white, since, in absolute numbers, there are three-and-one-half broken white families for every broken Negro family) are good and desirable. Who would quarrel with such a goal? And only the most stern critic of Mother's Day could knock the family allowance; indeed, members of the "welfare bureaucracy" have been advocating it for years, as one among several necessary tools to achieve appropriate income redistribution and maintenance. But such a program can be sold on its own considerable merits. . . . It does not have to be touted as a solution to racial inequality, nor attached to a scare-headline document that many Negroes found quite offensive.

As Moynihan has sensed, the controversy is ultimately ideological rather than scientific. We have, after all, no comparative information on what happens to American Negroes and their families in a racist and a non-racist society; the experimental data are available in huge quantities; the control data yet to be gathered. . . .

Allow me to conclude with just one point of personal privilege; I will let everything else go by as

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basically trivial. I was not "obsessed" by Moynihan's treatment of illegitimacy; I merely cited it as one example of his inadequate handling of the data. . . . Though I am flattered that he assumed so, I did not invent the idea of trying to estimate the incidence of out-of-wedlock conception; it is a routine concept in public health and fertility research.

More important, in trying to show that the final gross differences between white and Negro illegitimacy ratios were almost completely the result of a chain of systematic discriminatory barriers to information and services, I said nothing at all like the tasteless statement he attributed to me: ". . . while bourgeois females fornicate as much as, or even more than (although not of course so well as) Negro girls, and conceive almost as often. . . ." This parenthetical language, and these concerns, are Moynihan's, not mine. I don't count them as very relevant to the issue.

WILLIAM RYAN

Yale University
School of Medicine
New Haven, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is difficult to accept Daniel P. Moynihan's most recent comment upon the cultural patterns of urban Negroes: "Hence they simply cannot afford the luxury of having a large lower class that is at once deviant and dependent."

In practice, it is true, the poor seldom feel certain of their right not to conform to the standards of those people who do not behave like the majority of those people who support themselves.

On the contrary, it is particularly when any group of people is dependent, without financial or social or political power, that the democratic state must insist upon providing them the "luxury" of nonconformity.

MARY ELLMANN

Evanston, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Perhaps because I myself happen not to "come from the most solid, even rigid family background" that Mr. Moynihan attributes to Negro activists, I deplored the unfair attacks on his report on the Negro family.

What bothers me, however, is that a man who rightly claims to have been misquoted and misinterpreted could so preposterously distort my article, "The Watts 'Manifesto' and the McCone Report" [COMMENTARY, March 1966]. According to Mr. Moynihan, I did not consider the Watts disaster a "riot at all, but rather a 'Manifesto,' a nicely articulated and discriminating statement of a political viewpoint." This is not a fair description of an article which sought to refute the notion that the Watts riot was merely an outburst of blind irrationality with no inferable content. Having gone into Harlem during the riots in 1964 in an effort to restore peace, and having been spat upon and insulted while Mr. Moynihan was presumably home in bed, I do not need him to tell me how destructive rioting mobs can be.

Some of what Mr. Moynihan says of the liberal Left in America is insightful, but he does not define whom he is talking about. Instead he invents stereotypes. He ascribes to one political tendency two views: (1) that "the war in Vietnam is a monstrously immoral adventure forced on the nation by a half demented President in the hands of a paranoid military"; and (2) that "the war is become a routine, ongoing affair that provides no excuse whatever for not allocating the billions necessary to implement the 'Freedom Budget' at home."

Instead of seeing these two positions as poles of tension and conflict within the liberal Left, Mr. Moynihan finds it more convenient to assume that they are successive phases, dramatic shifts of a single coherent tendency. The fact is that the people committed to the Freedom Budget have never been associated with the first complex of ideas. (By the way, why does Mr. Moynihan, who is concerned with the social and economic conditions of Negro life, omit *any* discussion of the Freedom Budget? Does he believe that family allowances are the panacea? For your information, the Freedom Budget was introduced at the White House Planning Conference—thereby negating Mr. Moynihan's criticisms that the civil-rights movement presented no plans or concrete ideas at that conference.)

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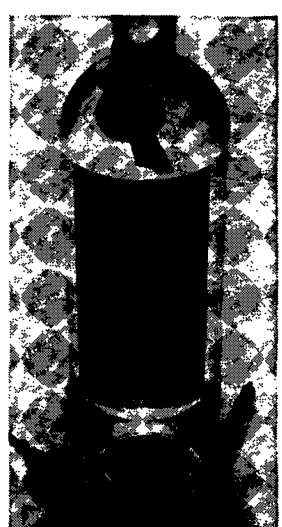

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skewed perspective which puts the Moynihan Report controversy at the center of the stage.

Most distressing of all, the undertone of bitterness in Mr. Moynihan's article reflects more than personal pique; it is a political alienation from the Negro movement. (Indeed, the very idea of movements is subordinated to high-level maneuvering among government officials and experts.) Nowhere is this cleavage of identification more evident than in the juxtaposition of these two sentences: "For anyone with even a moderate concern for the sources of stability in American government, the results of the 1966 elections will appear on balance a good thing"; "For Negro Americans the election may turn out to have been a calamity."

As a Negro American, I think the elections were a calamity. Mr. Moynihan thinks they were a good thing. Were I to follow Mr. Moynihan's practice of lumping people together under convenient labels, I would ask what Mr. Moynihan is doing in the company of some "Black Power" advocates who contributed to the Democratic defeats.

And in deeming the Republican resurgence a good thing, is he in the camp of those elements in the peace movement who favored this resurgence as a counterweight to the monomaniacal antics of a half-demented President in Vietnam? Far from doing battle against negative tendencies on the liberal Left, Mr. Moynihan opens himself to charges of abetting them.

I know better than to make such charges; I wish Mr. Moynihan knew better than to distort my views. He is probably right in foreseeing "an era of bad manners," but why should he help launch it with such relish?

BAYARD RUSTIN
Executive Director
A. Philip Randolph Institute
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . We are so accustomed to fine words without substance, noble gestures without deeds, that we cannot accept the truth plainly stated. Mr. Moynihan appears to be a clear thinker who has the courage to speak plainly and to the purpose. We need more like him. . . .

HELEN HILLER
Tarrytown, New York

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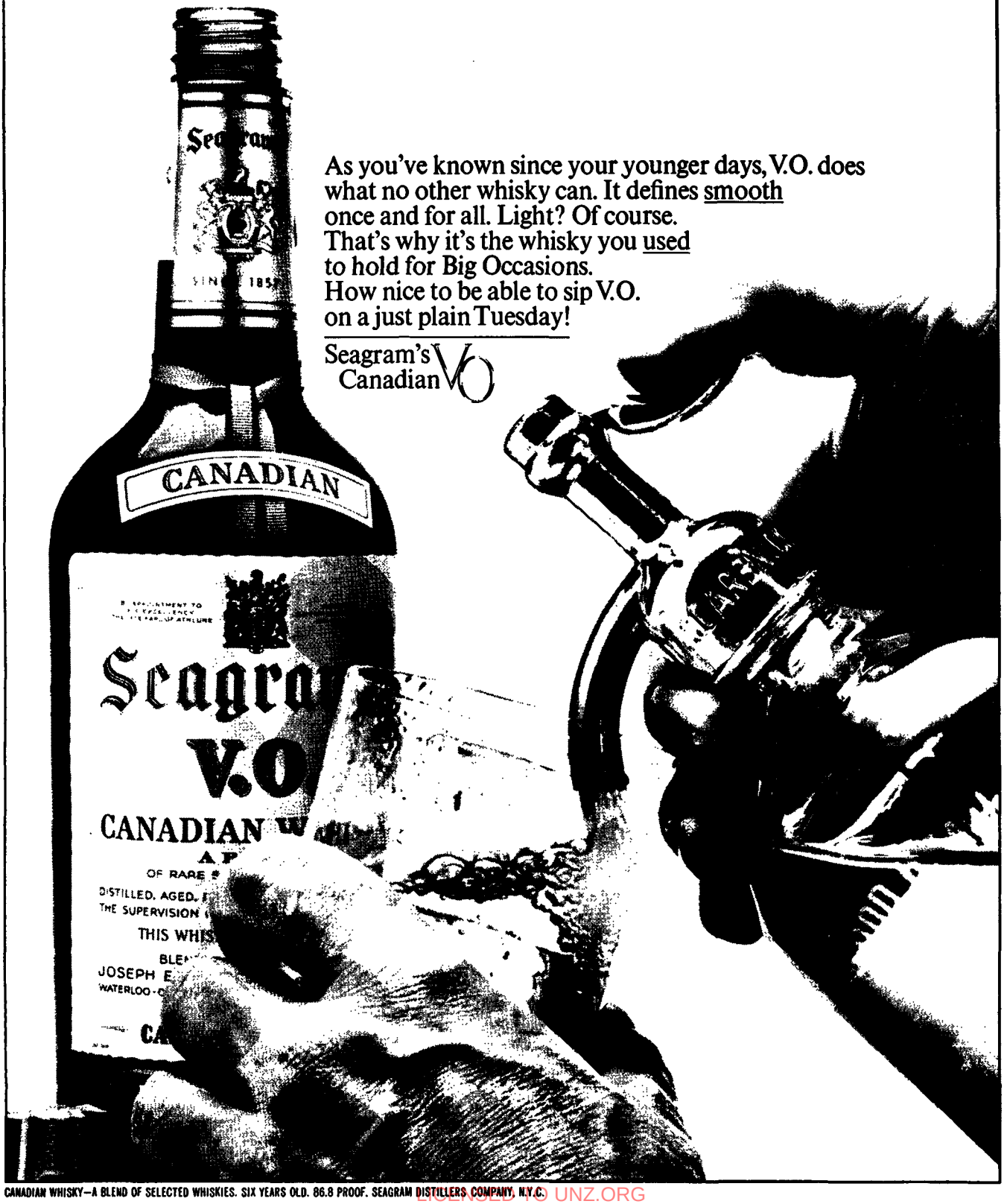

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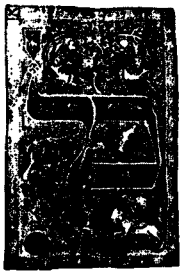
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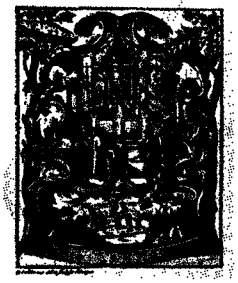
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1. "And this is the Torah which Moses set before the Children of Israel." Torah wrapper detail. German. 1812. Full color on white; matching env. 25¢

2. Searching for leavened bread before Passover. Engraving by Bernard Picart. French. 1723. Black on white, taupe border; light blue envelope. 15¢

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5. Dutch woodcut of 1663 depicting superstition concerning him who cannot see shadow of his head on 7th day of Sukkot. Black on white; med. blue env. 10¢

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11. Prayer, fasting, and repentance on Yom K the Day of Atonement. Engraving. German. Black on taupe panel; light blue envelope. 15

12. Decoration of Elul, last month of the year. Detail from embroidered Torah wrappe man. 1812. Full color on white; matching en

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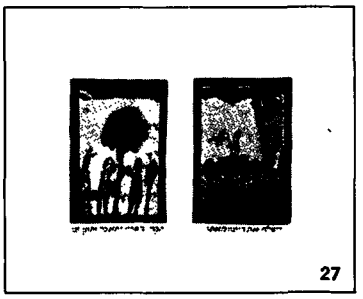
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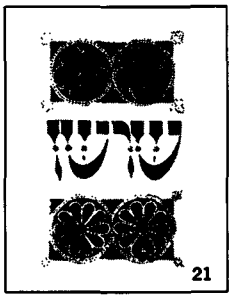
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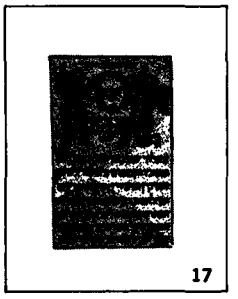
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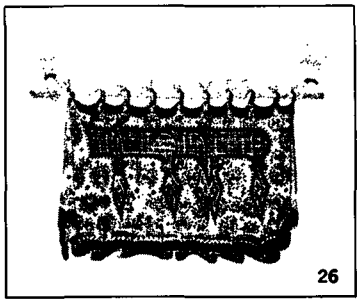
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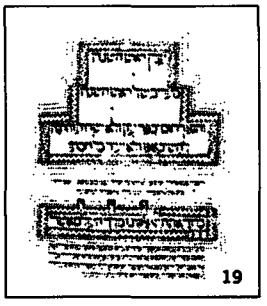
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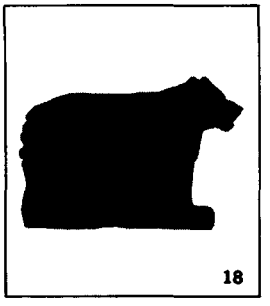
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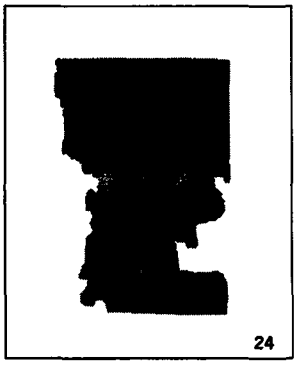
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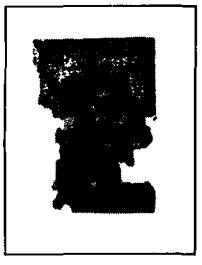

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I have always supported Mr. Moynihan's basic position and was sorry to see his excellent, and quite accurate conclusions distorted. . . .

What is wrong, I believe, is his espousal of the doctrine of the golden moment, that dramatic, ecstatic moment, when we *might* have won, if only. . . . Such speculations on what might have been are not only bad history . . . but what is even worse, bad sociology. For the simple sociological fact is that social change never takes place through moments, least of all in America. . . .

What Moynihan says comes to this: if there had not been a civil-service welfare bureaucracy, and if the whole movement had not been deserted by the liberals who preferred justice and ideology to family incomes, and if Negro ignoramuses and hotheads had not distorted his Report, and if the Vietnam war had not come along, then, ah then, we might have licked this thing.

Well, I submit . . . that the potential has never been as great as it is right now. You will not solve the problems you seek to solve by simply ignoring the civil-service welfare bureaucracy, or regarding it as a self-interested, narrow-minded bunch of professionals. Nor will the liberals with their penchant for ideology be left out, or stay out; nor will Negro leaders and wild men vanish. . . .

What Moynihan proposes, right as it is, can never actually be enacted without the moment-by-moment support, connivance, sacrifice, love, money, effort, votes, and prayers of all the groups and individuals that he seems to feel got in his way. Of such is the kingdom of earth. And since we now know much more clearly where people stand and what their clear interests are, we are in a much better position to attack the problem which he has described so clearly.

EDWARD GROSS
Department of Sociology
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Moynihan's article failed to recognize what was probably the principal reason the White House conferences on civil rights and the civil-rights movement were deterred from embracing the program which he advocates for repairing Negro family structure. It

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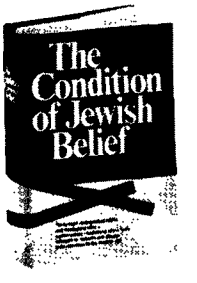

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Henry Jones and the B'nai B'rith

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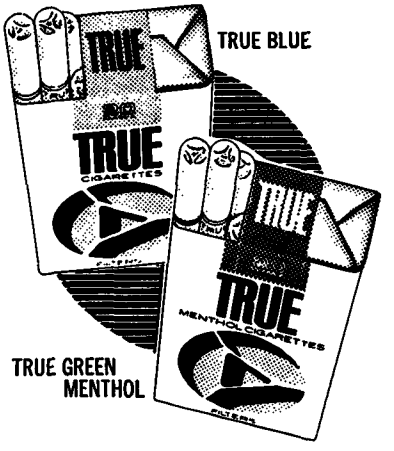
The new lodge which he called to order on October 13th of that year was dedicated to uniting Jews in the promotion of their own highest interests and those of humanity. It incorporated the principles of philanthropy, honor and patriotism—principles befitting the Sons of the Covenant, the *b'nai b'rith* of Abraham.

Incredibly, little is known about the founder of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith. Henry Jones evidently shunned the spotlight; he refused the presidency of the organization, and served instead as its secretary. But in B'nai B'rith he left a monument that testifies superbly to the quality and strength of his intellect and character. Brilliantly blue-printed, the organization was an immediate and enormous success, and its influence on the American Jewish community has been incalculable.

Because of his self-imposed anonymity, few people today are aware of Jones' enormous contribution to his people. But Julius Bien, B'nai B'rith's official historian and its president for 32 years, remembers: "His was the strong hand that kept the wheel straight on the course that he had determined upon, and only a man endowed as he was with strength of intellect and character, could succeed in his great purpose."



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was not a refusal to come to grips with the serious issues he emphasizes or a vendetta conducted by the welfare establishment and irresponsible militants. No civil-rights leader or worker denies the need for new strategies. They understand more than others the emptiness of good laws on the books which are not or cannot be implemented. But none of them conceived of "To Secure These Rights"—the title of the White House Conferences—as meetings concerned solely with the issue of family structure. This is not to say that they deny the importance of the problem. Most would agree that the Negro family has been severely damaged by the heritage of slavery and that remedial measures are needed. Many have attacked existing welfare policies. There was only the vaguest notion of the Moynihan Report among most White House conferees, and I doubt if any significant number heard of the Ryan article in the *Nation*, or as reprinted in *Crisis*. . . . The New York so-called pre-White House Conference had almost no influence; I was invited, did not intend, and never heard anyone refer to it.

What repelled the average participant at the White House Conference and the typical citizen involved in civil rights was the impression we got then, and which Mr. Moynihan's article conveys now, of an attitude that legal rights are all secured, the book must be closed on that aspect of the struggle, and a program devoted to improving family structure must be adopted instead. Mr. Moynihan does make some bows in the direction of recognizing the need for continuing the approach of past years. But he greatly minimizes it. The impression most of us received at the White House conferences and which his article conveys is that there was a movement to terminate efforts at desegregation of the many institutions where racial standards prevail. This is fortified by Mr. Moynihan's reference several times to the belief that conservatives, now in the ascendancy, might be willing to support a new family policy, although it would be difficult to muster them behind a program for equal rights as that term has been known.

While I am not opposed to a family allowance policy (though it raises serious issues about the role of work in society), I hardly think that it will wrap up the difficulties faced by American Negroes. I hope it would accomplish more, but I am confident only that it would slightly raise standards of living, important as that is. (The Legal Defense Fund, incidentally, is prosecuting suits attacking many of the policies of welfare administrators that tend to deteriorate family structure.) I certainly would not, however, urge a policy of dropping existing efforts to secure equality in exchange for a family allowance program. The broadest spectrum of approaches continues to be necessary. School desegregation—which I still think is exceedingly important—continues to creep along at a snail's pace. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act is hardly being enforced with great vigor. Housing remains almost totally segregated. Title VII, the Equal Employment Opportunity section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, is being enforced hardly at all. (The Legal Defense Fund has 35 lawsuits pending; the Department of Justice has one.) While conceding that legal approaches cannot be fully productive without taking other steps that affect society (and the family) at the same time, none of us in civil rights would tolerate seeing existing programs dropped. Yet by implication, by emphasis, and by statements such as "they now have enforced legal rights as never in their history . . ." there is presented the proposition that we ought to take a sharp turn in approach. Vague as it is, civil-rights workers who are used to being told to quit and try something else, were appalled. The program directed to the family issue would have been better received if it were presented not as virtually an alternative, but as a broadening of the front.

Those who recognize the importance of approaches beyond the legal, and I consider myself among them, believe that civil rights and the quality of life of the disadvantaged can be advanced only if the struggle for legal equality continues to be pursued, although not by that means alone. Employment, family, and educational policies that go beyond mere legal equality, flow from struggling to secure those rights in fact as well as theory. When legal equality is propelled to the fore, Negroes are no longer "invisible men." The nation then cannot turn away from the fact that *other* factors which make for full equality also must be coped with. The rights

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movement furnished the energy that led to Mr. Moynihan's proposal and other efforts to improve schools, jobs, housing, and so forth. If the civil-rights struggle, as we have known it, were to stop, the first consequence would be a lessening of pressures for social programs that implement it.

The White House conferees on civil rights and the movement, typically responsible, intelligent, and well-informed persons, spurned a program offered in exchange for something which was proven. They might have accepted it as a supplement to existing efforts. That consideration more than conspiracies, obscure articles, and vested interests of people they never knew, led to disaffection with the proposed new direction.

JACK GREENBERG
Director-Counsel
NAACP Legal Defense Fund
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . As a writer, Mr. Moynihan is rarely boring, and that's saying a good deal. As a social scientist, however, he does not always display sociological "tact," that unknown quantity which prevents the investigator from unduly antagonizing the group he is probing. . . .

AL LICHTENBERG
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The problem with Moynihan's discussion is the strategic aspect—the line of reasoning which, he thinks, leads directly from his diagnosis of the family problem to a policy of income supplementation. Moynihan himself realizes that many who objected to his report equate him with those who call for Negro self-improvement before the granting of equality. To this he responds in an abused tone that he is emphasizing the social condition of the Negro poor not as evidence of Negro unfitness, but in order to substantiate the need to raise Negro income. But the "logical" way to deal with family disorganization, if the disorganized show no signs of correcting their situation themselves, is to try to impose external norms by the usual methods of social work and social sanctions. Certainly, Moynihan's own statistics concerning the relationship between unemployment and fatherless families among Negroes seem to point to the inadequacy of an incomes policy.

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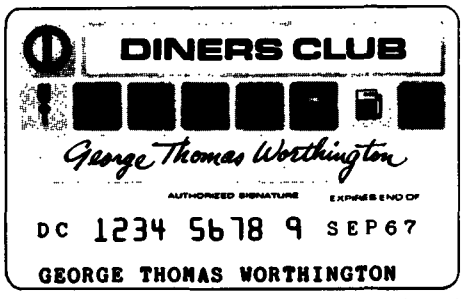

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Elsewhere, Moynihan has commented that the condition of the poor results from their not having enough money. Moreover, he indicates that a substantial increase in family income would be the single most effective device for broadening opportunities for lower-class Negroes and increasing family stability. Thus, arguments based on the simple proposition of making the poor less poor seem a far better political strategy than to raise once again the ghost of Booker T. Washington. It is one thing to debate whether Negro family disorganization is a cause or effect of poverty within the confines of the academic community, quite another to make it into a political issue.

SUSAN S. BOVE
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his interesting and controversial reply to some of his critics, Daniel P. Moynihan refers to the study done by the U.S. Office of Education on "Equality of Educational Opportunity," known as the "Coleman Report." Unfortunately, Moynihan uses some of the weaker items in this sometimes impressive report to make his point.

For example, the Coleman Report claimed that in the Northeastern metropolitan areas (including its suburbs) all-Negro and all-white schools had closely comparable physical conditions, teacher-student ratios, materials, equipment, etc. This just isn't so. . . . Having taught in three of the biggest Northern cities and read and examined with care the data published by their respective Boards of Education and other pertinent material, I can state categorically that on the average school day there are more uncovered classrooms in ghetto schools, more overcrowded classes, fewer books and extra materials, more double-shift grades, fewer art and music teachers, etc. . . .

Secondly, it is not a fact that "minority children have a *serious* educational deficiency at the start of school which is obviously not a result of school." This is sometimes claimed as the problem facing ghetto schools, but Coleman's study did not substantiate this theory. On the basis of tests (which because of class bias tend to underrate Negro intellectual adeptness) given in the first grade, he found Negro children to be at most a half-year behind their white counterparts. After six years of life in disadvantaged homes, this is not a very serious lag. On the basis of my own experience, and that widely reported by other teachers and principals, the horror is that they come to school eager, bright, quick, verbal, and every year thereafter the gap increases. Coleman claims the gap remains the same by using a very specialized statistical concept—standard deviation—and by ignoring dropouts, grade repeaters, etc., to do even this. The fact is, as Kenneth Clark has demonstrated, school is a disaster to the intellectual competency of all Negro children, and above all for Negro boys. . . .

Most striking of all, Coleman's study did not substantiate the importance of Negro family instability as a factor in educational achievement. Moynihan actually shifts to quoting Duncan to make this point and avoids noting that Coleman . . . found the reverse—that "the structural integrity of the home" (absence of a father) was irrelevant! . . .

Coleman found integrated schools to be a useful tool in raising achievement, even if only a little, for Negro students. Like Moynihan, I wholeheartedly agree with, and applaud, this finding, but it does not end the issue. For I would also say that it may be possible, albeit difficult, to create schools in which the intellectual ability that Negro children bring to school is utilized to further their intellectual growth rather than, as today, to depress this land of growth. . . .

Unfortunately, as long as we view the school primarily as a transmitter of middle-class values and manners, rather than as a place for intellectual growth, we will continue to have depressing results—regardless of whether we spend more money or not. . . .

DEBORAH MEIER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Assuming for the moment with Daniel P. Moynihan that the psychological subjugation of the Negro male is the basis for his economic and social malfunctioning in contemporary America, I still do not see how the creation of the family allowances Mr. Moynihan proposes will rejuvenate these bruised psyches. . . .

JACK PUSTILNIK
Department of Philosophy
Old Dominion College
Norfolk, Virginia

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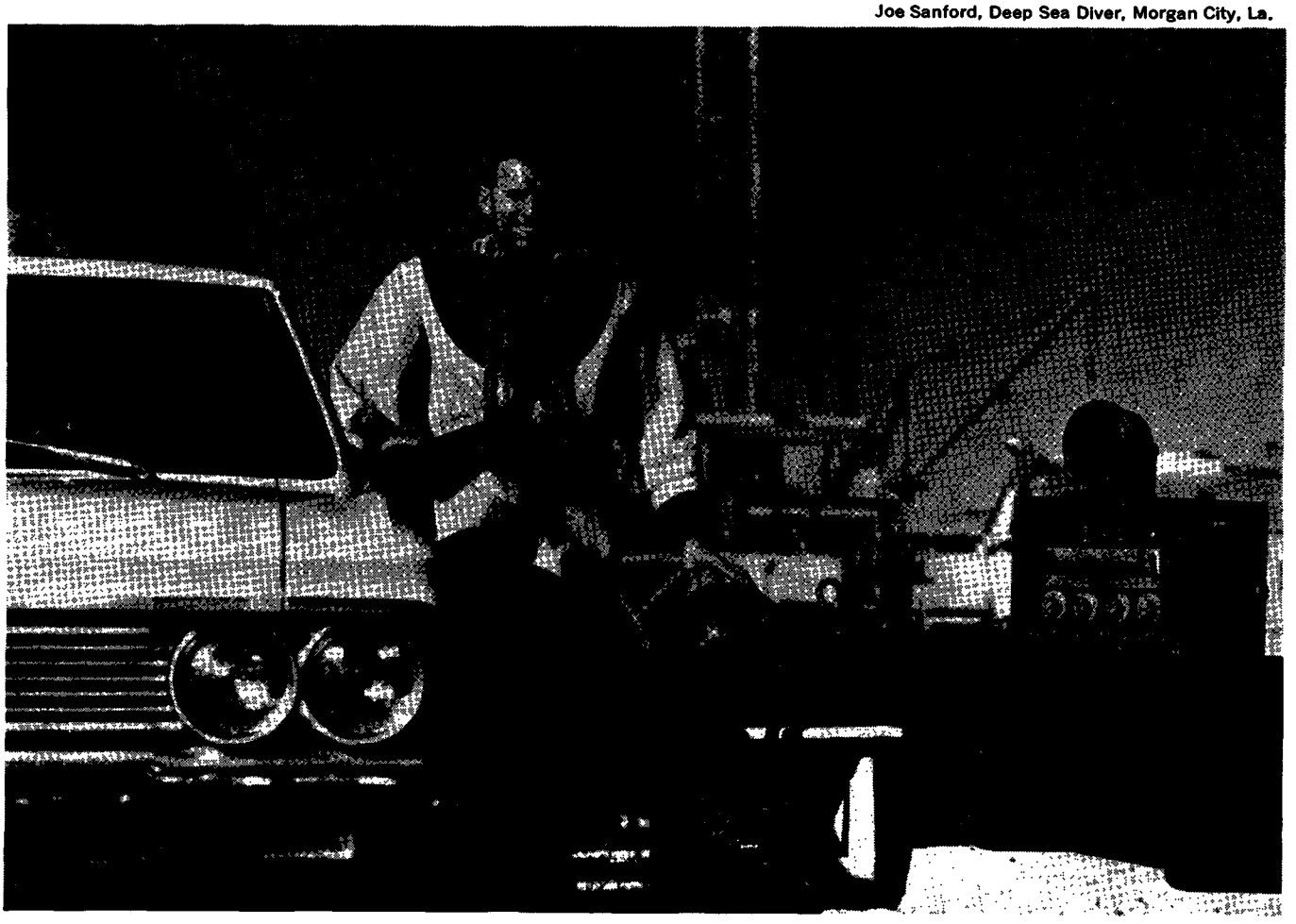

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TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Daniel P. Moynihan explains that the Moynihan Report was not meant as a definitive sociological study, so we must keep our hands off on that score. It also was not meant for public consumption, so it is not Mr. Moynihan's fault if it was leaked to the newspapers. . . . His report was meant, Mr. Moynihan says, as an attention-getting device and a plea for direct action.

But it is precisely here that his argument is difficult to follow. If it was a plea for action, why was there no recommendation for such action? . . .

The necessary program, he contends, was "obvious," including such measures as guaranteed full employment and a family allowance. These are fine progressive measures indeed, but "obvious"? To whom? Not to James Farmer and Ralph Ellison. . . . (I, for one, had visions of an army of blue-stockinged social workers invading the ghetto. . . .)

If, in fact, these measures were not presented and did not appear as logical follow-ups to civil-rights proponents, how could Mr. Moynihan depend so heavily on civil-rights support? And how can one assume that the same legislators who would be shocked into action by a report on Negro family weakness, would proceed with such sweeping welfare-state measures? . . .

MARCIA COHEN
Binghamton, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Moynihan vigorously resists the assertion that his view of the Negro family grows out of middle-class premises, yet that is the main criticism that has been leveled at his description of the Negro family—that it is not simply a factual analysis, but contains his own judgments and evaluations. There are *modes* of coping with the family situation which Negroes have adopted which are perhaps instructive for the society at large. Perhaps some money ought to be spent to convince our middle-class society to treat illegitimate children in the non-ostracizing and supportive way that they are treated in lower-income Negro groups. Perhaps some money ought to be spent to teach middle-class persons to be less hysterical about premarital sex. The list of these suggestions is probably endless. Attempts to force the low-income Negro family into the mold of the white middle-class family can only meet with failure since the conditions of life for the Negro family are so totally different. One cannot, on the one hand, ask middle-class values from a family while at the same time blocking their access to middle-class status and benefits. . . .

LEROY D. CLARK
NAACP Legal Defense Fund
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Daniel Patrick Moynihan's article was a masterpiece of courage. What he says has long needed saying. He is uncowed by popular dogmas, pressures, and cases and has retained his sanity in a field overwhelmed by confused . . . zealots. . . .

AARON ZANGER
New York City

MR. MOYNIHAN writes:

In my article I remarked that I was trying to describe the troubles a government initiative on a crucial issue of social policy had run into, with the hope that some of these might be avoided when the subject comes up again. Since then the study by Lee Rainwater and William L. Yancey of the controversy has been published, and it might be well here to reproduce their final paragraph, which I had not read until just now. . . :

> The . . . Report and the government's use of it were a response to a situation in which the government sought to be venturesome, instead of simply reacting to the civil-rights movement. The administration felt it was prepared politically to implement new policies. Now, from the point of view of independent governmental action, one might say that the issues raised by the Moynihan Report are dead. The Randolph Freedom Budget, an effort to describe in some detail the kind of program that Moynihan's efforts pointed toward, made its public appearance in the same week that the Republican-Southern conservative coalition regained its congressional hegemony. But, it is probably more accurate to say that these issues have merely been suppressed for the moment. The conditions of life in the Northern ghettos remain, and the need for broad social and economic changes remains. It is not likely that the civil-rights movement or the increasing aspirations and demands of the Negro American will decline. While the issues raised by the Moynihan Report are overshadowed for the moment, at some future time they will be raised again, debated and fought over, and, hopefully, bear fruit in meaningful programs to provide the kind of social and economic resources that must exist if Negroes are to have the chance to climb out of the degradation into which white society has forced them.

I believe this to be so—one must!—and that being the case I believe further that we should anticipate some of the difficulties that will arise. Certainly many of the letters above suggest that these difficulties will reappear with undiminished vigor. What it comes to in part is the question of the role of social science in these public issues, a matter of considerable general interest. In a paper entitled "Problems in the Use of Research Data to Support Civil Rights Propositions," written in 1964, Eleanor Wolf of Wayne State University raised this issue with considerable prescience. "Our outstanding contribution to this movement," she wrote, "may have been that of depriving its opponents of any claims to intellectual respectability. Certainly for the past twenty years we have supplied much of the material which has undermined racist beliefs, and we have both contributed evidence and helped to develop popular understanding of the socio-cultural basis of group behavioral differences. Our opponents in the colleges and universities of this country have been a tiny minority, lacking in influence and academic prestige." As we move to issues-beyond-desegregation, however, a different set of problems and a different "community" reaction appears. We are asked to be silent about some of the most serious difficulties at hand, in order not to give weapons to bigots, etc., etc., but if we are to be serious we cannot be silent. There is no cure for it. Dr. Wolf writes, "Social scientists have had considerable experience in being unpopular—but mostly with people for whom we had contempt. Now we must learn to endure upon occasion some measure of unpopularity from people we like." She cites a remark of Robert Perloff: "I would much rather participate in acquiring the data which the bigot may twist than sit back idly and watch him twist manufactured data," and she concludes on an important note: "It is close to the heart of our discipline to know something about the social pressures against the expression of

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deviant opinion." I have the feeling that to anticipate such troubles helps to surmount them, and that is why I wrote the article.

I would like to comment on three letters in particular. I certainly accept Professor Gross's cautions about the doctrine-of-the-golden-moment. On the other hand, if there ever was one in this area, it was surely the Spring of 1965. Would he not agree that it was as *close* to a golden moment as this kingdom admits? I found Mr. Greenberg's letter troubling but extremely useful as an indication of how difficult problems of communication can be, particularly the communication of intent. It is just because he is a prominent and distinguished civil-rights leader that one is concerned to find that he, and presumedly his associates, felt that the White House Conference "To Fulfill These Rights," involved "a movement to terminate efforts at desegregation." So far as I am aware that was never the intention of anyone. But if it was thought to be, then let us note how easily misunderstandings of great consequence can arise, and let us be on the watch for them in the future.

MRS. MEIER's letter raises some of the many puzzles to be encountered in the Coleman study of Equality of Educational Opportunity. This past year a faculty seminar has been meeting in Cambridge to consider the implications of this study, and to analyze the data somewhat further. On closer examination, I have so far found a distinct impact on the educational achievement of Negro students apparently traceable to whether or not their real father is living at home with them. (Barely half do.) However, this impact is smaller than it is for whites. It is my hypothesis that this is a compression effect: overall Negro achievement is comparatively quite low, so that variables other than social class show relatively less impact. However, it is Duncan's view, as I read him, and mine, that family structure both reflects and contributes to the perpetuation of low social class, and in that way, therefore, profoundly affects educational achievement.

It is all very complicated, and we must try to be charitable and not too recriminatory as we grope for a solution to a problem that could spoil this country if we don't get on with it.

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THE SHAPE OF AMERICAN POLITICS

RICHARD N. GOODWIN

OVER THE PAST several decades much of the world has been experiencing the growing power and dominion of centralized national leadership. The word "nation" itself, having once described a loosely governed confederation of territories or people, now increasingly refers to a fixed geographical area where a central authority assumes mounting responsibility for a range of social and economic activities formerly left to localities, tribal groups, or individuals. Empires have fragmented into nations or, as in Russia and China, old divisions have been obliterated under the imperatives of single rule.

Since this is a modern process, it tends to be most advanced in those countries most firmly committed to industrialization and national power. Africa, on the other hand, still struggles against tribalism, while some Latin American countries battle to assert national authority over historic enclaves of independent power and wealth. It may well appear from a distant point in history that the principal barrier to national progress in our time was simply the lack of a nation. Certainly one reason that many Latin American countries have not developed despite 150 years of independence and a Western heritage is that they have not been countries at all, but collections of independent principalities.

This process of centralization has not been confined by ideology. It has occurred under democracy and dictatorship; it has been guided by capitalism and socialism, Communism and Fascism. For it is imposed by the fusion of technology with the psychology of power. In making the concentration of power possible and expanding its uses, technology helps to liberate more forceful and sweeping impulses in those individuals who seek authority.

The process is global and differently shaped by the innumerable varieties of culture and circumstance. My discussion, however, will be restricted to the United States. It is what I know, and it best illuminates the most troubling political fact of our age: that the growth in central power has been accompanied by a swift and continual diminution in the significance of the individual citizen, transforming him from a wielder into an object of authority.

Although the problem is larger than politics, I write of it only in that single dimension: one, however, which is steadily more pervasive. Of all human activities, politics—the process of acquiring and using governmental or official power—is among the most responsive to shifting values and situations, always reflecting the dominant and visible themes of the human turbulence which creates it and which it attempts to govern. Hence politics cannot be understood or analyzed apart from the wider society which gives it coloration and direction. An artist may be an age ahead of his time. Even the greatest politician can only be a step or two ahead of his, although important action can spring from his ability to penetrate the obscurity which always enshrouds the real demands of any period. Actions and public words based on a more profound vision than this may suit a prophet, but not a politician. His material is the desires and attitudes of living people, and even the most violent revolutionary cannot escape that constraint, as Lenin knew and Alexander learned.

The growth of central, or federal, power in America during the past few decades has been phenomenal. Only thirty-five years ago, Mencken could write: "The rewards of the Presidency are mostly trashy. . . . The President continues, of course, to be an eminent man, but only in the sense that Jack Dempsey, Babe Ruth, and Henry Ford have been eminent men." He describes a typical Presidential day: "All day long the right hon. lord of us all sits listening to bores and quacks. Anon a Secretary rushes in with the news that some eminent movie actor . . . has died, and the President must seize a pen and write a telegram of condolence to the widow. Once a year he is repaid by receiving a telegram on his birthday from King George. . . . It takes four days hard work to concoct a speech without a sensible word in it. Next day a dam must be opened somewhere. Four Senators get drunk and try to neck a lady politician. . . . The Presidential automobile runs over a dog. It rains."

RICHARD N. GOODWIN, a former special assistant to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, is currently a fellow of the Center for Advanced Studies at Wesleyan University. He was one of the participants in our round-table discussion, "Containing China" (May 1966).

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We still mock our Presidents, sometimes brutally, but not because they are futile, comic, or unimportant. The springs of today's satire are fear and rage rather than condescension. For the target is immense.

The federal government spends about one-seventh of our national wealth and creates more of it. Between 1950 and 1960, nine out of ten new jobs were created by the public and the private not-for-profit sectors, and only one out of ten by private enterprise. Today, one-third of the entire labor force works for someone other than a profit-making institution. The towering apparatus of scientific and technological research which is remaking our society, and causing apprehension in Europe, is increasingly fueled by federal funds. It is the government, not private business, that is held responsible for the condition of the economy: credited with prosperity; blamed for recession and inflation; expected simultaneously to make the country prosper, end unemployment, and keep prices down. Of course Washington's power and skill are not equal to such expectations, but it is inconceivable that any President today would greet economic dissatisfaction by pleading, "There is nothing I can do," or even worse, "It is none of my business." The first to assault any such forfeiture would be the conservative members of the business establishment, rapidly joined in an improbable chorus by liberal democrats, the New Left, and the editors of the *New York Review of Books*.

But today's government is not only expected to maintain prosperity; it is also expected to ensure justice. Those who are denied their fair demands by our society look to Washington for help in righting felt wrongs, or scorn it for inaction. The hopeful and contemptuous alike have little doubt where the main responsibility lies. Social ills, from benighted cities to polluted air, are regarded as the charge of government; and Washington is also expected to lead the way out of the automobile-choked tunnels in which we are incarcerating ourselves.

THE 1966 elections dramatized yet another important responsibility now assigned to government: keeper of the status quo. It is expected to be the protector of all those who are both delighted and unsure about their new affluence—the suburban houses, new cars, and television sets. They command the government to restrain any social turbulence which seems to threaten their personal position. This demand, which might be called Reaganism, finds its most violent expression when it combines with racial fears and bigotry into the "white backlash." Increasingly, the obligation it imposes conflicts with the aims of justice and with the more embracing effort to modify society in the direction of an enlarged individual existence for all.

We have, for the most part, tried to extricate ourselves from this clash of aims by a kind of tokenism: pretending to make war on poverty or to enforce civil rights while confining resources and power to a dismally inadequate level, thus easing conscience and subduing fears while making real sacrifice unnecessary—all often accompanied by a spurious rhetorical evenhandedness which equates the violence of a few frustrated Negroes with the huge oppression of millions. Fortunately the tokenism extends to both sides of the social clash, as we substitute "wars on crime" or exhortations against "violence" for more vigorous repression. However, in a relatively nonviolent country, where the most urgent interests are those of a minority, tokenism is not neutral. It is a powerful ally of existing inequalities.

Augmenting the swelling domestic authority of government, there is the conduct of foreign policy, which gives to a few men, often acting in partial secrecy, the power to commit our country to action in all parts of the world, send hundreds of thousands to fight in distant lands, and entangle the resources and honor of the nation in adventures, promises, programs, and acts in every continent. This control culminates in the numbly familiar power to decree our destruction—a power less real because it is beyond the grasp of consciousness, but present and infusing all the other acts of government with majesty and terror.

We usually associate all this centralization with the Presidency, both because the power of that office has increased disproportionately and because the President is most visible to our expectations and our rage: we find a personal target more congenial than an institutional one. Most of our discontents are therefore directed at an individual's defects of character, temperament, or intelligence, rather than at the structure which permits such qualities to rule or, at least, leaves a great deal of our welfare in the hands of chance. The more that power is concentrated, the greater the stakes on the always obscure gamble of selection.

Yet the Presidency is not the only part of our government whose power has grown. The Supreme Court helped lead the social revolution of the Negro: an astounding role for an institution whose previous incursions into the political process had nearly always been to check the affirmative action of government (e.g., the New Deal Court, the Income Tax Cases, and, more ambiguously, the Dred Scott decision). Sharing in the general euphoria of power, the nine justices of the Supreme Court make major political decisions, unresponsive to the democratic process, in secret meetings on Friday afternoons. Both the number and the scope of such decisions steadily mount. Liberal critics have generally approved this development because they approve the content of the decisions, while the fundamental reshaping of an important institution seems not to trouble them. But it is a transformation which

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almost certainly will come back to plague us as judicial personnel and social attitudes change, and as an institution which has become more and more political develops an even greater sensitivity to transitory shifts in the political temper.

Congress, too, shares in the mounting power of the federal government, exercising its authority to frustrate the will of the President, or to collaborate with him in denying redress. Congressional action is often spoken of as negative power, a sort of reverse veto. But that is because we are trapped in the liberal rhetoric which defines positive action as increased spending, greater regulation, or new programs. Freed of that semantic trap, we see that the judgments of Congress are extraordinarily powerful affirmative ones: to direct more of our resources toward private consumption than public needs, to cut taxes rather than increase spending, to calm the fears of the homeowner against black invasion, to deny assistance to developing countries, or to support isolationism and chauvinism. At times its judgments are—from a liberal standpoint—more benign, although this is often not perceived, since it tends to take the form of support for the administration. (On the other hand, congressional leaders helped decide that we should stay out of Indochina in 1954, and that the right to some privacy overrode the need to wiretap.) More important than its specific actions is the fact that Congress sets the limits and framework for Presidential action. Perhaps the most effective restraint on social legislation, increased spending, and other liberal measures is not any sense of popular opposition, but the foreknowledge that Congress will reject such proposals or that the effort to pass them will eat up so much political capital as to endanger measures thought more essential, or even erode the zealously guarded prestige and power of the President (as in the case of Harry Truman and "socialized" medicine). Presidents would often be far more radical if they thought Congress would let them get away with it. Nor are such assumptions about the limits of congressional tolerance usually made explicit in discussions between congressional leaders and the administration. They are so much a part of the political atmosphere that they dominate and restrict discussion at even the most private meetings. It is not that proposals are rejected. They are not even put forth for analysis or debate; and the process of innovation is one of constantly and cautiously probing these invisible boundaries. Of course, Congress has not shared to any comparable extent in the conduct of foreign affairs. However, the President's concern with foreign matters has probably increased congressional importance in the domestic field since, especially in times of crisis, he must often seek support by moderating his domestic demands, in a sense "buying" allegiance. As most congressmen are far more interested in these issues, they find the division satisfactory.

THE REALITY OF increased federal power is undeniable. The events and circumstances which have created it are more tangled and ambiguous. Most obvious is the necessity for federal leadership in the conduct of foreign affairs, accepted by even the most conservative. Thus, as America became a global power with swiftly spreading burdens and ambitions, government waxed. Our relations with other countries, deeply and even mortally consequential in themselves, inevitably seep into a hundred areas of national life, shaping the structure of our industrial system, setting priorities for education and scholarship, pushing us toward technology and away from other pursuits.

Through this indirect effect on other institutions, and through the immediate impact of particular decisions and acts, the conduct of foreign affairs pervades the attitudes of the nation, contributing to a national mood of enthusiasm or resignation, anger or despair, which unavoidably carries over into a wide range of unrelated public problems and private sensibilities. The war in Vietnam has crippled and drained the drive behind civil rights. The presence and potential of nuclear power has entered into our art, and probably into the psychological structure of every citizen. Yet this towering power is for the most part in the hands of a single man and his employees. Even the normal checks on public dissent are partially sterilized by ignorance, central control over information, and the fact that immediate self-interest is usually not involved, thus depriving protest of the passion which comes from simple personal engagement. It is part of the naivete of the conservative position to believe that foreign affairs can be compartmentalized—that enormous power can be granted in the world arena while being withdrawn from domestic affairs. The truth is that authority over foreign affairs carries with it a new, wholly modern, ability to alter the nature and direction of our society.

In some measure the increase in central power is attributable to the converging flow of historical and psychological factors. The New Deal, out of necessity, created large new authority for government. More importantly, it led citizens to expect a great deal more than they previously had from Washington. Once this process had begun, it could not easily be arrested. For the natural inertia of the American system resists all but the most critical and revolutionary conditions, such as the Depression itself. The single conservative administration since Roosevelt could only consolidate, and not reverse, the flow. In our nation popular expectations and political power ride side-by-side. As demands increased, the central government was compelled to seek fresh authority. Those who chose conservative principle over political response met the fate of Taft and Goldwater.

Strengthening this domestic "revolution of rising expectations" is the natural tendency of

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political leaders to add to their power, to relish the "anguish" of decision, and to resent any effort to oppose their will. I do not mean this as criticism. It is a psychological condition of great leadership to want power and receive satisfaction from its exercise, just as a great artist must desire command over his materials. (Justice Frankfurter once told me no one could be a great President who didn't enjoy the job—even if he was occasionally tormented by its burdens. Of course, the fact that a man enjoys power does not in itself make him great.) It is natural for a leader, once in possession of power, to resist frustration. Our system is deliberately and instinctively designed to restrain this ominous psychological inclination. The great number of institutional "checks and balances" are combined with less formal limitations grounded in national traditions and values, political realities, popular sentiment, and the power of the press to criticize and expose. These are often the most potent restraints, not only limiting what a leader can do, but what he would think of doing. They are accepted and even cherished by men whose indoctrination in the American system is stronger than inner drives to power. Like most important political guides, they are rarely articulated, having been absorbed into character and personality. (For example, no one doubted that President Truman would relinquish the steel industry when the Supreme Court ordered him to do so. Yet it is hard to think of another country where a President would yield to a judicial body on a matter of such magnitude. Nor could the Court have made him act if he refused to. It was simply "unthinkable" that he should refuse.)

The price of this system is often inaction, or very slow progress. For radical and swift changes require great and concentrated authority, which, in turn, is extraordinarily dangerous in the wrong hands. We can see today how the concentration of power over foreign affairs in a single man—long a goal of that liberal thought which was contemptuous of congressional conservatism—has dissolved the normal checks of our institutional structure. And these restraints have been neutralized precisely in the area where political checks—public opinion and the press—are weakest, poorly informed, most prone to emotional reaction (especially since personal economic interests are rarely affected in any obvious way), and most willing, in resigned bafflement at complexities, to accept Presidential direction on faith. It is possible that conservatives have something to teach about the value of institutional arrangements, and the unwisdom of sacrificing them to immediate desires. At least we should understand that the hope for pure self-restraint in the use of power can be a very feeble guarantee, and often weakest in the temperament which wishes to accomplish the most for the country.

This interlocking psychological and historical process has been given a greater momentum by our increasing ability to shape events from the center. Economics and, to a far lesser extent, other social sciences have enabled us to achieve an improved mastery over the operations of society. We now try to control economic conditions in every section of the country, using newly refined tools of fiscal and monetary policy—raising and lowering taxes and interest rates in response to computerized projection and the counsel of experts and businessmen. (These tools are more doubtful than a few recent successes have led us to believe, and as presently used they have serious social costs, depriving the government of revenue to support needed social programs and generally aggravating maldistribution of income.) Mass communications and swift transportation have enabled government to bring its authority and assistance to bear in a detailed and specific manner, allowing it to construct the rapidly responsive bureaucracy hitherto thought impossible in a nation of continental dimensions, and encouraging the natural tendency of local officials to turn to the federal government. Hardly a day passes without a phone call from a mayor asking for concrete advice or help. Task forces and experts are constantly dispatched to states and towns, not only in flood or famine, but to examine housing programs, evaluate complaints about pollution control, and to decide whether new power lines are going to blight a suburban area. Computerization of government, the next stage, will increase the possibilities of central control and influence and, unless we make some fairly radical structural changes, will in fact bring about such an increase.

MANY OF THESE new mechanisms and techniques are more efficient and result in greater justice—at least in the abstract sense of that term. It is hard to argue that we should not make sure everyone pays his taxes. Yet the knowledge that a giant computer in West Virginia is making a detailed analysis of the economic status of every American will add an inevitable, subtle, and pervasive tension to the financial transactions of each citizen—just as the sight of a police car in the rear-view mirror makes even the law-abiding motorist wary and self-conscious. That is a rather high price to pay to catch a few cheaters, especially when our tax laws give advantages to the privileged which no system of automation can remedy.

Access and communication, however, also work in reverse, occasionally yielding a political influence to disadvantaged groups greater than their economic and social power. We are past the time of the 1920's when millions of farmers could languish in desperation and cause scarcely a ripple in Washington. For example, the civil-rights movement owes much of its impact to the television cameras which displayed the cruelties of Bull Connor and the violence of Selma to an audience

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for whom racial injustice in the South had seemed as remote as apartheid in South Africa. Through modern communication, Negro leaders have become national celebrities, enhancing the power and possibilities of leadership. Similarly, the poverty program owes a great deal to books and articles: a series in the New York *Times* on Kentucky, Michael Harrington's book, and a piece by Dwight Macdonald in the *New Yorker*—all of which helped to stimulate conscience and political action by introducing thoughtful citizens and national leaders to the agonies of the previously unnoticed millions trapped beneath the surface of affluence.

These varied forces contributing to central power have a unifying theme: the mutually reinforcing concurrence of national demand and expectation with the assertion of power and the capacity to exercise it. There is, however, a more subtle, pervasive, and probably more significant factor. It is the gradual dissolution of alternative outlets for grievances, demands, ambitions, and inner needs. It is as if many small magnets and a single large one were scattered on a floor. If the smaller magnets steadily lost their force, particles would break away and take their place in the stronger field of force. Something like that has happened to American political life.

There are, after all, many ways for a man to change the conditions of his life or modify his environment. He can act through local government, social institutions, and private organizations. Or he can gain access to opportunities which do not rest on official action—by, for example, "going West" to an unsettled frontier.

All these possibilities have been dissolving. Large-scale opportunity outside settled institutions began to disappear when the West was closed. After that, migrants and minorities sought a path into society through unskilled labor. Its virtual elimination in modern times may prove as momentous an event as the end of the frontier. Certainly the distress of northern Negroes, and their struggle, would have taken a different shape if this same opportunity had been open to them. Today it is no longer possible to avoid conflict with society while gathering strength to force an entrance. The confrontation must be direct and immediate, and the unequal odds in such a clash require the intervention of the federal government, now the necessary agent of social change—and thus more powerful still.

More important to the growth of central power than the destruction of frontiers is the dwindling influence of local government and private associations. This erosion has been produced by two major social changes. The first, and most obvious, is the enormous resistance and complexity of many modern problems, requiring an antagonist of great force and resources. The second is a loss of connection: the fraying of human, civic, and territorial bonds between the individual and the disembodied structures which surround him. In consequence, the individual loses confidence in the capacity of local structures to modify the political conditions of existence, a self-fulfilling distrust which accelerates the weakening process. Diminishing faith turns people, not away from authority, but toward a more powerful center. This is certainly one of the reasons that totalitarianism finds its moment of opportunity at times of relative chaos.

Added to the many social and psychological conditions which have assaulted these historic structures are the growth in population (diluting participation in local government) and our fantastic mobility (making it hard to retain local allegiances). Therefore, individuals again turn toward the central government where, it seems, grievances and hopes can be effectively aired, and to which citizens in all parts of the country, even the rootless and displaced, feel some connection.

These weakened structures confront a social order whose growing rigidity closes off many traditional non-governmental outlets for change and for those personal ambitions which depend on social justice. The power of large corporations, the sanctity of the search for profits, the desirability of swift economic growth (we measure our success by our Gross National Product), and the exaltation of technology, are all virtually beyond serious challenge. Private citizens, communities, and even states feel helpless to deal with abuses resulting from an unchallengeable ideology and, being small, they are most vulnerable to the interests which benefit from this ideology. Thus our suburbs become horrors of ugliness, discomfort, and spiritual devastation because the right to buy land and build on it is sacred. The blurred advance of technology makes it impossible for any but the most sophisticated and endowed to weigh the advantage of change against the social ills it may bring. Since so much of our system is fixed, it is necessary to turn to the one authority still capable of channeling our institutions, through coercion or guidance, toward desired change: the central government.

Rising wealth also adds to central power. Although new affluence encourages conservatism, the "new conservatives" are usually far more concerned with the content of authority than the fact of its exercise. They find it possible to oppose welfare programs on the ground that they are against big government while supporting larger police powers and a range of new coercive authority for the state. In addition, many modern conservatives favor an interventionist and aggressive foreign policy which would inevitably lead to more formidable and sweeping powers for the federal government. This is far less principled than the conservatism of Jefferson or even Taft. It is rooted in economic self-interest, but whereas the dominant emotion of classical New England conservatives was confidence in themselves and in

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local institutions coupled with resentment at intrusion, the dominant feeling behind much of the new conservatism is fear (reinforced by a temperamental preference for abstraction over compassion). Behind the paradoxical conservative contribution to growing central power is the desire for protection of the newly affluent against unpleasant, troubling, and threatening social forces. Much of the root of today's liberal-conservative tension is the clash between fear and confidence, which is why conservatism tends to rise in times of felt danger and crisis. Certainly some of the most successful reactionary and conservative movements have rested on uncertainty and apprehension, while liberalism has generally tried to fuse popular desires with elitist confidence. (This gives us some hope that the second and later generations of the newly affluent—even in California—will be less conservative.)

CENTRAL POWER is not in itself contemptible or hazardous, but must be judged by the extent to which it enlarges or constricts the possibilities of individual existence. Difficult as it is to untangle relationships and sources, we can be certain that rising central power has been accompanied by the diminishing significance of political man. In part this human lessening flows from the increase in central power itself; in part from the changes contributing to that increase; and, in incalculable part, from the general nature of the modern world.

The individual's confidence in his own significance rests on the share of mastery he possesses over his life and environment. An internal ability to come to terms with the world, to seek a place in the drama, is imperative. Still, even the most intense and controlled awareness of self will not suffice for the person who is constantly denied, rejected, and ignored by his world, unless he possesses those rare inner resources which allow him to create his own. But that is not politics. As political affairs become more centralized and as personal, group, and local responsibilities are absorbed, this vital sense of mastery is eroded. For, in fact, the individual's ability to control circumstances is diminished.

This is not simply a political phenomenon. It saturates our philosophical, technological, and social environment; and even as politics, it cannot be discussed apart from the commanding values of the time. These values differ radically from those which in one form or another have been dominant since the Renaissance—a historical moment, Michelet explained, that was characterized by "man's discovering of the world and of man." Before this, Burckhardt says, man had seen himself as a part of a series of categories—a member of his people, party, or family. Now "man became a spiritual individual." As this focus shifted, there was an effort to comprehend the essence of man, along with a search for a fresh synthesis of the new "spiritual individual" with the world around him. There was a growing faith that incomplete human understanding resulted from an imperfect knowledge we could labor to complete.

One of the last glories of the Renaissance, and one of its destroyers, Albert Einstein, when faced with theories that assumed the essential role of chance in describing the existence of basic units of the material world, asked: "Do you really believe God resorts to dice playing?" He spoke in the tradition which encouraged the conviction that the free play of the inquiring mind would lead to a complete and harmonious account of reality. In that tradition philosophers and artists alike had struggled to grasp man's nature as incorporated into systematic statements of faith and organic representations of reality. Now the belief in the possibility of such unity and wholeness is fading. We live, instead, at a time of fragmentation and dissection, in search of the components of our sensible world. The concept of God as a source of moral authority dissolves into mystical generalizations or disappears. Efforts at systematic philosophy are scorned, ignored, or become the province of esoteric technicians. Saint Augustine and Spinoza become Norman O. Brown and Marshall McLuhan.

Art continues and reflects the process of fragmentation, reducing objects to light and form and regarding constituent elements as ultimate realities rather than as parts of a large reconstruction. In literature and films we dissect emotions and actions alike, casting them as isolated fragments in order to evoke confused sadness at absurdity. Our hunger is more for experience than for meaning, for expanded sensation rather than coherent understanding. Even the insistent quest for the nature and meaning of man begins to yield, as psychology and biochemistry break us up into instincts, drives, creations of other beings, molecules, chemical codes, and electrical patterns, until the question, What is man?, begins to lose meaning in its historic sense. Man becomes a physical phenomenon, different from other forms of life only in degree and power, all his complexities ultimately describable and predictable. We look for the truth in the pieces of the puzzle and not in the picture they make. For that picture is largely the random, purposeless assembly of myriad components in a single unit of living flesh.

This drive away from system and toward fragmentation has the force of a primitive religion. No one denies that it must go on, or that science and technology are to be pursued regardless of the values they imperil. *They* are the values. At one time it was possible to ask whether the fact that the earth revolved around the sun was worth knowing, if knowing it might deprive us of God. But it is Galileo who is our hero, not his foes.

Our American culture, more intensely than any other, reflects the process of fragmentation. A man as perceptive as André Malraux can claim

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that the United States lacks a national culture, since he looks for that culture in its classical sense —a structure of values and meaning embodying itself in certain forms. Our culture is of a different kind, rooted in our history as a nation. It is a culture of restlessness. Its principal values are change and movement, all continuously feeding the hunger for experience. This culture is sweeping the world, in painting, in theater, in the changing beat of music, in the adoration of technology. It is the culture of an age of fragmentation, at once reflecting and feeding that process. For it does not demand or provide the resting-place that unity and wholeness require. It transforms values into psychology, drives, hungers, and actions; it replaces belief with "authenticity."

Whatever this process of fragmentation may yield us in scientific knowledge or artistic accomplishment, it is charged with danger for political and social man. In these arenas of human activity there is no possible unit smaller than the individual. And the most vital and passionate need of the individual is for mastery: both over himself, and through some shaping share in the world around him. It becomes enormously difficult to achieve such mastery in the midst of dissolution and constant movement. Yet those who are deprived of mastery for themselves are often driven to cede it to others, perhaps ultimately forfeiting their freedom.

WHETHER OR NOT the foregoing description has psychological and philosophical validity, it provides an analytic lens through which we can view our political and social institutions. More conservative than science or thought, they still reflect—as already suggested in the above account of the forces behind rising central power —the more profound contemporary currents of fragmentation and dissolution. Family ties stretch and break as the gap between the experience of the generations widens, and as more spacious possibilities of geographical and occupational mobility remove the pressure to reconcile natural hostilities and make it easier to indulge them. The community disappears, as the comprehensible unit of living blends into the huge, accidental monstrosities our cities have become. Science describes our world in terms beyond all but the most specialized understanding, dissolving control in mystery. Most of us know little more about the working of our world than did the ancients who ascribed natural phenomena to spirits. They, however, had the advantage of believing in their explanation, while we are only aware of our ignorance. Cities and technology, production and population, grow and change, powered by forces which seem beyond the control, and even the desire, of the individual person. A handful of men in remote capitals hold our existence hostage to their wisdom or impulse or sanity. The small groups where we could once achieve a sense of belonging and of being needed, because we could encompass them with our knowledge and presence, are disappearing, while the activities they once guided—the life of a town and of its citizens —now seem hopelessly beyond their competence.

As these myriad enemies assault the private stronghold of influence and importance, alienation, rage, desperation, and a growing sense of futility increasingly scar our political life. Two principal forms of reaction emerge. Violent protests and extreme convictions reflect the frustration of many at their inability to assert their significance and to share in the enterprise of society. Men of vitality and passion matched against indifference and encumbered by futility have virtually no recourse but rage. The history of the civil-rights movement reveals how helplessness can drive the pursuit of unexceptionable goals toward violent rhetoric. "Black power" is more a cry of despair and a plea for attention than a signal for battle. Among larger numbers, less endowed with vitality and conviction, there is a rising determination to protect and conserve. They seek security for their present position in the face of receding confidence in their own ability to shape the future.

We see these basic impulses in manifold, sometimes terrifying, forms: more reasonably in the New Right and the New Left, irrationally violent among Minutemen and John Birchers, Black Muslims and Southern Secessionists. They are reflected in the compulsive search for a hero or an enemy, and in a deepening disgust with political life itself. (Nothing more ironically illuminates this point than the contrasting attitudes toward power in *MacBird* and in the Shakespearean plays of which it is a pastiche.) All these conflicting movements help serve the single purpose of giving the individuals who belong to them the inner sense of significance that comes from being a part of some larger purpose. They reveal how a feeling of impotence is charged with danger, polarizing groups and individuals and creating a nation of strangers, until even those with whom we sympathize glare at us across an impassable barrier of hostility. The gradual decline of the Vietnam debate into competing slogans and invective is our most recent example of this process in action. The result is not merely extremism, but resignation and lassitude embodied in an unwillingness to face problems, make personal commitments, or to act until difficulties have all but overwhelmed us.

Thus, whatever our particular political positions, the one overriding goal of political life must be to help restore and strengthen that faith of the individual in himself which is the source of national direction and generosity of deed.

This may be an illusory goal. Perhaps the machine is already out of control, hurling us toward a future where we will all blend into some grotesque organism, our sensations absorbed by discordant sound and flashing light—where life itself

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is an endless "trip." Yet no one who pursues the profession of politics can permit himself to regard the goal as illusory, any more than a novelist can permit himself to believe that the form in which he works is obsolete. Politics alone cannot remedy a condition whose causes are so manifold. But it is at least partly a political task.

II

THERE ARE TWO mingled aspects of public policy: content and technique, and though they are ultimately inseparable, each has effects of its own. The United States, Russia, and China, for example, have all worked to increase agricultural production, but their differing techniques have shaped the life of the individual farmer in drastically different ways. Thus political methods and structures can in certain cases do more to affect the individual than the substance of policy itself. But before proposing some structural changes in a form concrete and specific enough for immediate political action, I would like to touch briefly on the matter of substance.

The content of public policy in any society is dictated by ideology; there is no such thing as a non-ideological society. All nations, including our own, are governed on the basis of ideas and values, passionately shared and defended, which are not derived either from the necessities of nature or the command of God. If a man snatches his hand from a hot stove, that is not ideological. If he then decrees there shall be no more hot stoves in order to prevent burning, he has imposed an ideology (and one wholly alien to our own). Public affairs cannot be conducted outside an ideological system. "Pragmatism," as we tend to use that word, may be adequate for a man stranded on a desert island—at least once he has decided to live and seek rescue. Our own world is too complex for that. We cannot hope to grasp all the variables of our life and deal with them anew each time we struggle for decision. We need, and we have, a mixed array of beliefs, values, and ideas to serve as reference points, so that pragmatic action moves carefully within a tightly confined ideological space.

Ours is one of the most ideological nations of all. The very absence of serious and widespread public debate proves how successfully ideas have been woven into our national life. They almost seem part of the nature of things rather than what they are: human choices among a great variety of possibilities. There are many ways to resolve difficulties, but only ideology can reveal what a difficulty is. The elements of our ideology, not the illusory question of its existence, require careful exploration by those who seek change and reform. I make no such ambitious effort here. Yet some of these elements are obvious: nationalism and the democratic process, concepts of individual liberty and obedience to law, the faith in technology and the pursuit of invention, the virtue of rising national wealth, the willingness to reward production more than teaching, or acting more than contemplation, and even the conviction that problems can be solved.

Anyone in government who has had the experience of proposing measures which even cautiously probe the boundaries of our system of belief can testify to the rooted passion which defends it. Often changes that are self-evidently beneficial prove surprisingly hard to bring about even when opposing interests are pitifully weak. When we find that a series of such obstructed reforms has a single theme, we have touched an ideological nerve. Therefore the search for policies which might enhance the individual's sense of mastery must, in the first instance, be ideological. The only realistic political approach is to build on major elements of existing belief rather than to erase and begin again.

In our domestic affairs, two ideas above all need to be modified and strengthened. One is our idea of justice. The other is the concept of public responsibility for the quality of individual life.

Justice, as equal treatment, or in the more abstract sense of the fulfillment of fair expectations, is a historic goal of the American system. It has generally been enforced by the elimination of formal barriers—property restrictions on voting, racial and religious discrimination—on the assumption that in the absence of such barriers, disadvantaged individuals and groups would be free to fight and work their way into the society according to their individual merits. This idea is no longer adequate; indeed, it has itself become a principal obstacle to justice. For many of the weapons of earlier battles have been seriously blunted.

The classic pathway of unskilled labor is now closed to the excluded. Their potential political strength has been mortally diluted by the rise of metropolitan populations (making their numbers less important), and by the shift in power toward a central government which must weigh their needs against the demands of a huge majority—something mayors of Boston never had to do. The complexities of modern existence are an ever-returning maze through which the underprivileged must wander in mounting frustration: bad education breeds unemployment, unemployment brings poverty, poverty dulls capacity and desire, which in turn insures poor education. The spread of affluence requires minorities to battle, not against a small entrenched aristocracy, but a huge and ever more fearful majority. The essence of social struggle has always been "Which side are you on?" and the sides are becoming steadily more disproportionate. The Negro in particular must also face the darkly resistant racial feelings which are more intense than the hostility ever directed against other American minorities. All this commands government to go beyond the responsibility for an

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often illusory equality of "opportunity," and to set itself the job of equipping underprivileged individuals to meet the demands of society while at the same time compelling their admittance. Justice is not merely liberation, but assistance and compulsion. This does not entail a change in expressed American objectives but a shift in the ideas essential to those objectives.

Clashing even more dramatically with the old ideologies is the necessity for government to concern itself with the quality of individual life. In a few carefully confined areas we have made this our concern. The Bill of Rights was not adopted for its economic efficiency, and the conservation struggle is a half-century old. Still, the major goal of our modern domestic policy has been rising national wealth and its wider distribution, with special provision for those kept from competition by unavoidable circumstance—the old, unemployed, and afflicted. These are benign objectives, but they are dismally insufficient. The assumption that private affluence would enable individual citizens to create a decent and liberating environment has collapsed. That failure can be seen in the chaos and degradation of our cities, the pollution of our air and water, the ruthless destructiveness of our highways, and the desolation of our countryside. The same qualitative failure pursues us into every corner of our national life, whether we are hypnotized by the destructive sterility of our government-supported (but not controlled) television networks, or send our children to schools which crush imagination and the desire to learn. Even the sustaining values of community have, in incalculable measure, been destroyed, not by changing values, but by a physical environment designed to obstruct continuing human contact.

The important thing about these afflictions is that virtually no one can escape them. Certainly so many problems with a common theme must have an ideological base—a suspicion strengthened by the knowledge that effort directed at such social ills would rapidly return to enrich the nation, not only spiritually, but in dollars and cents. We would create jobs and useful work and investment, finding it possible to have both private affluence and public improvement. The strength of the obstructing ideology here can be gauged by the fact that, until recently, we not only failed to attack these problems, but rarely thought of doing so. Made invisible by ideological preconceptions, the entire issue hardly reached the level of public debate (though, of course, some social critics saw the problem).

THIS IDEOLOGY sets the boundary line between those matters which are the proper concern of government and those which rest with individuals. The barrier is rooted in a passion which transcends immediate self-interest—and we can all think of activities unrelated to economic interests which we wish kept free of government. In this case ideology dictated that commercial enterprise had a right to expand and change. Of course abuses should be restrained. But they were abuses of economic power directed against consumers and citizens—monopolies and price-fixing, child labor and resistance to unions. Abuse was a category which did not encompass the non-economic, social consequences of economic expansion. These were in effect forbidden ground. Once personal liberty was ensured, the proper concern of government was economic expansion, protection against commercial exploitation, and justice as narrowly defined. As if this concept were not confining enough, there were also the inherent limitations of a political system designed to respond to crisis. We could act only when a problem became urgent or an abuse widespread, provoking intense public concern. We had neither the mechanisms nor the habits of thought for any other approach; and except for some rudimentary and permissive economic planning (which fits the ideology), the deficiency remains. Unfortunately, when many of today's social problems reach the crisis stage they are already almost beyond redemption: New York City.

It is now essential to accept the reality that the public conditions of private life are a matter of public concern, that dealing with them is beyond the capacities of individual citizens, and that they require a major redirection of our energies and resources. The choice between lower taxes and a vast program for the cities is ordinarily posed in terms of the vague and ideologically potent stereotypes of government spending and bureaucracy as against private consumption and initiative. It is natural for citizens, confronted by such a choice, to prefer immediate tangible reward to remote and largely abstract benefit. In truth, it is all private consumption: the choice is between a second car and clean air, between a new television set and a park for one's children. When we spend billions for space while slums go unattended, and when we lavish attention on computer systems to guide aircraft while breathing poisoned air, we are not simply being wasteful or irrational; we are acting out of a structure of ideas whose modification requires national leadership and education. The time is propitious for such a change, precisely because the affluence which has been created by our old policies allows people to divert themselves from the economic struggle long enough to feel dismay at the world we have been building.

There are already some signs of a shift in belief. We have new demonstration programs for our cities and even a Council on the Arts. Just as this movement began to pick up momentum, it was paralyzed by the Vietnamese war. If times improve, we can hope for an ideological change bringing the demand for public action against those social ills which cripple the quality of individual life.

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We may eventually view the refusal of a builder to provide parks and trees with the same incredulity with which we would now greet a denial by General Motors of Walter Reuther's right to bargain for higher wages—an idea easily accepted not too long ago.

Utopian as much of this may sound, it is less far-reaching than the changes required in our policies toward the rest of the world. However, in foreign policy the possibility of radical changes in ideology—and consequently in action—is far greater. Our domestic policies are sustained by a network of resistant structures and institutions, closely identified with the personal self-interest of large and powerful numbers. Foreign policy, on the other hand, is much less firmly tied to group interests or to institutional structures. That is why it can change so rapidly, and why the President has such great power in this area. We have moved from isolation to war, from a relapsing withdrawal to the Marshall Plan, from Kennedy detente to Johnson interventionism, with each shift eventually winning much establishment and popular assent.

Another reason for directing major concentration to foreign affairs is their importance. Our great problems increasingly derive from world conditions. It is on the world stage that America has its opportunity to act a great role in human history—an enterprise to alter the human condition and the relationship among the peoples of the earth.

Such an enterprise is essential to the goal of an enlarged individual existence, and thus to our national health and sanity. Personal fulfillment flows from the opportunity to share in a great adventure, whose aim and conduct can be a source of idealistic pride. A gifted and lucky few find this in their own work and talents. For most of us, nothing is more oppressive than to be a member of a society whose operations we view as menial, self-regarding, cruel, or aimless. Today, especially among the young, the inspiriting sense Americans have had of helping to unfold a noble destiny is fading. Still, even in the harshest criticism there is an undertone of hope which would be impossible in many other more cynical and less powerful countries (their impotence is real). Behind the most passionate contemporary assaults against modern America, we can glimpse the unarticulated belief that with other leaders or with a different system, this country—its people—is still capable of constructive and idealistic action. I share this optimism.

Clearly such a shift in foreign policy cannot be brought about solely by the desire of a rich and powerful country to protect itself from global turbulence—the foreign counterpart of the new conservatism. There is no glory, and little future, in being the guardian of the international status quo. But neither is it necessary to be self-damaging. For we are in the almost unique position where a policy of revolutionary idealism is consistent with our own immediate self-interest as it is most deeply understood.

Before exploring this point, let us clear away some underbrush. People and nations can, and often do, act with irrational lust and violence. Our society and its values have been threatened by military aggression in the past, and may well be again. There are those who would joyfully overrun us tomorrow if they could. Sometimes it may be necessary to resist by force, and it is certainly necessary to be prepared for such resistance. Until there are important changes in the human condition, fear, not love or even reason, will be a principal keeper of the peace. (I am not talking here of our disastrous policy in Vietnam.) It is also true that particular problems require concrete or "pragmatic" responses. However, cult words like "realism" or "pragmatism" should not be allowed to cloud the real problems of foreign policy. They are not wrong, but they are virtually useless. All they mean is that any objective should be pursued rationally and with the widest possible knowledge of the circumstances. They tell us nothing about the objectives which should be pursued.

SELF-INTEREST is another word used to confuse and often destroy debate. The physical protection of our population and its material well-being are clearly in our self-interest. Beyond that are multitudinous complications of values and judgment. As between tranquility or ferment, indulgence or sacrifice, the comfort of undisturbed and mounting wealth or the joy of living by ideals, it is far from self-evident which we ought to choose, and our choice will rest on the spiritual circumstances of the country. However, there is a second and more corrupting sense in which the term "self-interest" is used—to label particular actions and policies. This usage is almost always invoked to end debate entirely, serving as it does to imply that an adversary is hopelessly abstract, romantic, or confused. Thus we are told that it is in our self-interest to destroy the Vietcong, or to support the military in certain South American countries, or to be gentle with South Africa. (Conservatives seem to have a genius for winning the all-important semantic battles. Anti-union laws become "right to work"; national health insurance becomes "socialized medicine"; a proposal to eliminate the concentration of the draft on the poor and disadvantaged becomes a "lottery.") Those who oppose such policies are often cast by this brilliant rhetorical device as betrayers of the national interest.

Yet those policies are not expressions of self-interest at all, but only measures which someone thinks will contribute to it. Moreover, the self-interest they presume to advance is often narrow and shortsighted. To take a simple and obvious example: there are those who wish us to support,

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or at least readily accept, authoritarian military governments in South America because they contribute to economic and political stability. I believe we should support liberal, progressive forces in South America, even if they are revolutionary in character (I do not becloud the issue by introducing the subject of Communism), because in the long run they are the only force which can both win in their own countries and maintain a fruitful association with the United States; because we will be more comfortable and (again in the long run), safer in a hemisphere dominated by these forces; and because our spiritual health as a country will be enhanced by supporting them. Thus I view my position as realistically and pragmatically in our self-interest, and I look upon favoring the military as a form of self-destructive and quixotic romanticism.

OF COURSE, a general policy is not a detailed guide to specific problems. If the military takes over, its rule becomes a fact which must be dealt with, introducing many complicated questions to be weighed on their own. Nevertheless, the general proposition gives a direction to policies and expressions which will be profoundly significant to ultimate results and will often also have a crucial effect on particular decisions. (Thus, we cut off aid to Peru for two years because it had a dispute with a Standard Oil subsidiary over the division of royalties. That action flowed from a distinct ideological position that was violently opposed to our true interests. A different, and more intelligent, understanding of our goals in Peru would have forbidden such a masochistic decision.) In short, the imperative questions of foreign policy are: which goals serve the long-run interest of the American people, and what policies are best calculated to move us in that direction. That discussion leads from the most remote and prophetic considerations to specific policies and acts. For example, we can assert that we wish to help in the development of the Third World. Why? Out of charity or fear? Do we really have an obligation? If so, what is it grounded on? Do we believe that the world can't exist with a poor majority and a rich minority? Why not, when it always has? If we should help, then how much, whom, and under what conditions?

Answers to such questions are implied in the view that a policy of revolutionary idealism is both desirable and practicable for the United States. To begin with, there is the comforting reality that we are almost the first great power whose self-aggrandizement does not depend on dominion over others. Our enormous strength makes us impregnable to any but the largest and most serious threats—for the moment only to a direct attack by the Soviet Union. China may, in some still remote time, be able to transform hostility into danger, but Cuba, Guinea, Albania, etc., unless they should become active and effective agents of a hostile great power, are only an emotional annoyance.

Our economy is also virtually self-sufficient, depending for mounting prosperity neither on control of foreign markets nor on foreign sources of raw materials. So long as conditions permit us to buy and sell in the world market, we need not exercise control or ownership over any other territory. It is true that our gold reserves are in a hazardous position—which, however, could be secured if we were willing to free ourselves from the theology of international finance. In any event that particular danger, real and influential on policy as it now is, does not rest on reality, in the sense that it does not come from any weakness of our economy. It is a creature of habits and conventions which, if changed, would not affect our ability to produce or consume.

The bald statement of these facts does conceal several complexities. For example, the spread of hostile governments to significant areas of the world would have a profound and damaging psychological effect, even if it did not place us in direct physical danger. The facts do, however, make it plain that our foreign policy is potentially freer from the bedrock considerations of national security and economic health than that of any other power in history.

This relative freedom gives us an opportunity to pursue a foreign policy which can engage the pride and idealism of our own people, enhancing their well-being and lifting the quality of our civilization with vastly liberating effects on future generations. The American people are not only willing to support such a policy, but need it. It is no accident that President Kennedy's best remembered line is the famous "Ask not . . ." or that the Peace Corps received such an overwhelmingly unexpected response. Leadership which appeals to confidence instead of fear will find a great thirst for idealistic mission among the majority. It has been present in times of war, and there is much evidence, especially on college campuses, that it is waiting to be slaked today.

Much of our present foreign-policy debate revolves around clashing espousals of isolationism. They are new types of isolationism, since our strength, our world position, and the decline of other powers make the old style impossible. On one side, to oversimplify, are those who wish our policy to be directed basically at opposition to real or apprehended physical threats. The twin elements of this view are containment and order. Its underlying plea is, "Leave us alone." On the other side are those who believe we have no right to influence other countries or to interfere in their affairs. This view is often accompanied by a disbelief in the reality of irrational passions, hatreds, and desires for conquest (except, perhaps, when it comes to the United States). Its plea is, "Leave *them* alone."

But there is also a non-isolationist strain in

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American history and culture—a sense of American mission—upon which we can draw. Certainly we cannot presume to dictate how the nations of the world should organize their societies. But we do have something to offer and to teach. We know that it is better for people to eat than to starve and that increasing individual prosperity is better than hopeless misery. We know that human well-being is increased by liberty of expression and belief, and damaged by repression and persecution. Peace is better than war, and the growth of effective international restraints is a necessary condition of peace.

Propositions of this type (and many more are possible) seem self-evident, even banal. So they are—until they are coupled with the assertion that the United States has a responsibility to realize them on a global scale. To the extent that we act on them now, it is in a token and fragmentary way; therefore, for all the rhetoric, they are not an important part of our foreign policy.

A foreign policy grounded on *this* ideology would look far different from much of our present conduct. We would devote large resources to the economic development of the poorer countries. We would alter the patterns of trade to encourage worldwide industrialization. We would direct our support and friendship to those nations trying to create such conditions, regardless of their shifting political attitudes, unless they were to rise to the status of a real and physically menacing enemy. We would take the lead in mobilizing serious international opposition to large-scale persecution and oppression, and not be content to regard an occasional vote for a diluted United Nations resolution against apartheid as a triumph of idealistic liberalism. We would recognize that revolutionary violence may sometimes be necessary to eliminate deeply embedded institutions and values which obstruct both justice and progress.

None of these policies, or the turbulence they might often help create, would—except in very special and unusual circumstances—endanger either our security or our economy. On the contrary, they would contribute to the emergence of a community of shared values and expectations within which we would undoubtedly be safer and more prosperous than ever. It would be our kind of world. The forceful pursuit of such policies would have an impact on the spiritual welfare of American society which would radiate into every aspect of our domestic affairs. We would stand for something, not just rhetorically but in engagement, and that sort of ideology would generate its own consequences in action.

A foreign policy of this kind would represent realism in its clearest and noblest form. To sacrifice basic beliefs and goals to the apparent demands and interests of every passing problem and conflict reflects both timidity and lack of imagination. In the long run such a course can only lead to a world environment in which even our narrowest material and physical interests are unsafe, to say nothing of its inevitably erosive effect on the idea of American civilization itself. We are fond of historical parallels. They should convince us that in the conditions of the modern world a policy founded on generosity and idealism is the only policy that is pragmatic and realistic, conducive to national grandeur and, ultimately, to national survival.

III

As IMPORTANT as the content and direction of public policies are the methods and structures used to carry them out. Initially, the elaborate structure of American federalism mirrored the judgment that a great deal should be left to local authority. For decades we have been moving in the other direction. Not only is this a dangerous and, as I believe, a mistaken course, but it is becoming clearer that certain substantive objectives utterly depend upon fashioning fresh techniques. Modern poverty, for example, cannot be abolished by friendly edicts from remote officials, and even if it could, the result would be sterile, vacuous, and purely material.

The blended goal of structure and policy alike must be to meet specific ills through methods which can in themselves enlarge the sense and reality of individual relevance and participation. The way to accomplish this, at least on the political front, is through decentralization—by assisting and compelling states, communities, and private groups to assume a greater share of responsibility for collective action. In other words, both burden and enterprise must be shifted into units of action small enough to allow for more intimate personal contact and numerous enough to widen the outlets for direct participation and control.

Such a shift, although it faces many problems, is both the most practical and politically realistic of all the ideas discussed here. From the community action program of the war against poverty to the private organizing efforts of Students for a Democratic Society, we are being given tangible proof of the viability of the decentralized approach. If these programs have been inadequate, it is only because they have so far been unable to overcome the ingrown and embedded obstacles to popular participation: the men and interests threatened by a transfer of power.

Notwithstanding this resistance, the idea of decentralization is making its first timid and tentative appearances in political rhetoric. It is possible to predict that the first party to carry this banner (if buttressed by a solid program) will find itself on the right side of the decisive issue of the 1970's. At the moment the idea hovers elusively between liberal Democrats and liberal Republicans. Both face built-in political barriers. For the Democrats

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it is the difficulty of overcoming ideological attitudes which place the burden of salvation on Washington. For Republicans it is the more obstructive necessity to mollify those conservative elements which oppose any social action by government, whatever the techniques.

Yet the issues involved in decentralization are remote from the old struggles over states' rights and big government. Those struggles centered on the question of whether any effort at all should be made to solve social problems through collective action and public resources. Decentralization, however, assumes that this question is resolved affirmatively, and sees the issue as one of structure and organization (and power). Even modern conservatism is moving closer to a benign view of decentralization. In his campaign for Mayor of New York, Mr. William Buckley argued for city action against problems ranging from air pollution to the scarcity of bicycle paths. He opposed federal intervention because it was "none of their business," making his objections to government action more geographical than ideological.

Although decentralization is designed to help combat the social and spiritual ills of fragmentation, it also responds to the fact that centralized bureaucracies tend to become increasingly ineffective and coercive in direct proportion to the scope and intricacy of the problem they are established to solve. This was less apparent when much of government action consisted of grants, subsidies, or insurance for individuals. It is not difficult to write checks. Now, however, we must apply complete technical and planning skills to wide-ranging difficulties. One need only look at the fantastic labyrinth of welfare programs, the monstrous incapacities of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare—operated by one of the best teams of executives in government—as well as the foreseeable futilities of the new Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Transportation, to realize that something is wrong with the old approach.

Decentralization would not only shift responsibility to state and local government. Private groups would also be involved, either by government (as in the community action program of the war against poverty) or through their own, self-generated efforts. By thus directly engaging individuals, and giving them a sense of participation and commitment, we could stimulate the desire for goals toward which many remain indifferent or even hostile while they are the province of a removed and abstract central government. If, for example, we could involve large numbers of Americans in programs of help to underdeveloped countries, they would become increasingly convinced, and even passionate, about the moral and political necessity for such programs.

Responsibility is the breeder of ability, and by assigning responsibility—real responsibility for important matters—decentralization would help improve the talent engaged in local government. Hours are spent in town councils arguing about the placement of new traffic lights, while the great issues are debated in Washington. It is little wonder that men of vitality and ability are reluctant to serve or else quickly lose their enthusiasm. Even so, the importance of political life is already attracting more able men into local public service, and the ability to solve problems is becoming a requirement of election to state houses and city halls.

Decentralization is not abdication. It is possible, as I will outline, to set standards for local action and by enforcing these standards to raise the level of performance. Different problems will call for different structures, requiring a great deal of political creativity and experiment. But there are common obstacles and methods of approach.

In a moment I will discuss some specific examples, but the guiding principle should be the transfer to local government or private groups of the needed resources, and the responsibility for decision, action, and policy in accordance with national standards of varying degrees of specificity. We are already doing this, to some extent, in programs ranging from the war against poverty to the construction of waste treatment plants on our rivers. (Standards, incidentally, can be educational rather than coercive. Often local groups are unaware of the dimensions of a problem, nor can they command the technical and intellectual resources necessary to devise solutions. A small but fascinating model of the educational approach is the President's Committee on Physical Fitness. That committee drew up model programs of physical training for schools, community organizations, and individuals. Though it had no regulatory power and hardly any money, the result has been a flourishing of physical-fitness programs across the country. The same technique might well be applied to the formulation of model school curricula, child-care centers, traffic-control programs, etc.)

THE FACT THAT local government lacks the resources—financial and human—to cope with even its present difficulties is a powerful barrier to decentralization. Walter Heller has proposed that the federal government simply turn over, presumably on a per capita basis, some of its revenue to the states. I am a great admirer of Mr. Heller and respect the liberal impulse behind his idea. It is, however, a counsel of defeat. It anticipates that Congress will react to rising revenues by cutting taxes rather than by helping the poor or rebuilding our cities, and it hopes to forestall this by transferring revenue out of congressional hands and out of the national budget (an objective which some conservatives have not fully understood). Thus the Heller Plan assumes that the politics of inertia—where programs are neither eliminated nor substantially increased—will dom-

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inate the federal structure. It also subsumes the praiseworthy faith that state governments will use this money for critical public needs. Actually, however, some will use it well and some will not. Depending on what the states do with the money, the Heller Plan may or may not increase the resources available for social problems, and could even lessen them. I expect that a higher level of local ability and public purpose will be set by the mounting responsibilities which come with decentralization. This does not mean, however, that the necessary ability and integrity are *already* sitting in every state house, crippled only by lack of money. It is a notorious fact that many state legislatures are more responsive to private interests, from loan companies to home builders, than is the Congress. Under the Heller Plan, it is quite possible that New York residents may end up paying federal taxes to reduce the tax burden on property owners in Indiana. Moreover, some assurance is needed that revenue collected across the nation is not sent to areas where its benefits are denied to Negroes.

Many of these problems can be avoided, and state competence raised, by turning resources over to the states for concrete purposes and with specific standards of performance, rather than by lump-sum payments. In addition, we may find that it is not the state but the city or smaller communities and private groups which are the appropriate units of action. Decentralization should go further and deeper than the state house. The Heller Plan might be worth trying if there were no alternatives, but there are many alternatives. They vary in the extent to which they restrict and direct state and local use of nationally collected resources. They provide a great deal more flexibility and a strengthened assurance that critical needs will be met. Since I am not an economist, I only speak in general terms about matters which are highly technical in detail.

First, we can establish federal standards and guidelines in specific areas—e.g., housing or pollution control—and allocate funds to the local units which meet the requirements. This is the structure of the anti-pollution program for rivers and the new Demonstration Cities Act.

Second, there is the possibility of credits against federal income taxes for additional state taxes that would be earmarked for particular purposes like education. There would have to be some safeguards against the transfer of state revenues to other purposes in order to reduce local taxes, and perhaps also a rising base line could be established which would take growing state population and wealth into consideration.

Third is a variant of the Heller Plan: general appropriations to local authorities for a variety of specified purposes, such as health, education housing, training, etc., allowing the state or locality to set its own priorities. Of course, tax credits can be used in the same way.

I am sure there are other fiscal devices (for example, allowing states to require tolls on the interstate highway system if the revenues are devoted to certain public purposes) which might also serve to increase the resources available to states as an instrument of decentralization.

MONEY AND programs are useless without competent people to administer them. Although imaginative political leadership will sometimes recruit men of unusual ability (as Richard Lee has proved in New Haven), human skill is harder to find than cash, both because able men are not often attracted to local government and because we lack trained people. As greater responsibility flows outward from Washington, and as the work of states and communities becomes more important, public life will become more and more attractive. We will, however, have to make a generous national effort to train people for public service—something we have been slipshod about even at the federal level, where the defect has become more serious as problems have become more technical.

Again the viable techniques are numerous. Let me mention a few possibilities: federal grants to universities to establish training programs, perhaps even a foundaton similar to the National Science Foundation; federally-financed training institutes, for young men or established civil servants, either under national auspices or under the control of regions or states; subsidies for the salaries and expenses of highly skilled people; model codes for government workers, embracing incentive, tenure, recognition, etc. Perhaps a Governors' Conference could set such projects in motion. Many similar things are already done in other fields. For example, federal effort—seed money as well as full support—has enormously increased the number and quality of men and women engaged in scientific research. Certainly public service is no less important. Of course, even this effort will not coerce able men into public service, although it may help multiply their numbers and develop their talents. However, the Peace Corps and poverty program, the civil-rights movement, and my own observations across the country have convinced me that large numbers of our citizens are seeking some effective way to serve society, and they are often willing to give up the attractions of private life for such an opportunity. If we do not provide them with the chance, our most valuable national resource will be dissipated.

I do not wish to elaborate on the many concrete areas where decentralization of activity is immediately practical. These will be limited only by our political and technical inventiveness. We already have several experiments to point the way. Still, it would be unfair not to give a few specific examples of realistic applications. I will sketch these examples in general terms. Carrying

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them out will require rigorous and detailed work. The Peace Corps was a few sentences in a campaign speech. The law establishing it takes up many pages.

To begin with the most difficult area of all, foreign policy: it is desirable and possible, and it may even be necessary, to turn over a substantial part of the foreign assistance program to state administration. Let me give an example of what I mean. The single most important economic problem for the developing countries is agriculture. The large majority of their populations work the soil. Agricultural development is essential for food, to lessen dependence on foreign imports (thus conserving foreign exchange), and to provide a market for industry by raising the income of farmers. The United States has an enormously successful agricultural economy, and the skill, know-how, and energy which built that economy can be found in the states rather than Washington—in the great agricultural universities, state departments of agriculture, and among private associations of farmers and growers. Several years ago it was proposed to President Kennedy that we ask a particular state government to administer our agricultural development program in a specified country or countries, giving the state all federal money set aside for this purpose. He was enthusiastic and wrote two or three personal memoranda to the State Department urging action.

The subsequent inaction was a dramatically illuminating example of the ability of a bureaucracy to frustrate a President. Nevertheless, it could not ignore him entirely. The first project (which was to be "experimental" even though the President had already decided on the general policy) was to ask the state of California to run the agricultural program in Chile. California has many of the same problems and crops, similar variations in climate, and even looks like a very fat version of Chile. Its population is larger, with approximately the same acreage of arable land, and it still manages to export 80-90 per cent of its production while Chile has to import food. I was a member of the team which went to Sacramento to discuss the project with Governor Brown. He was as enthusiastic as the President had been, and nearly all the concerned officials of his government shared his enthusiasm. They devoted many hours to planning and discussion, promised to invest substantial energy in the program, and to hire additional people. All this culminated in the signing of an agreement in the White House by the President and the Governor.

The project has not lived up to expectations, primarily because AID was unwilling to let go of the responsibility for a large part of its program. Yet it is just this kind of delegation of full control with its political and dramatic impact which is essential to any statewide feeling of significant participation. The arguments for it are, in my view, overwhelming. The states are better at agriculture than AID can ever hope to be and would do a better job. Although the states would be spending federal money, the drama, the publicity, and the fact that leadership was coming from the state house would inevitably summon widespread contributions of money and talent from the private sector and local government. Growers' groups might offer technical assistance, while high schools might establish exchange programs. Communities would "adopt" counterpart communities in the developing country. The possibilities are endless, and enough of them began to appear in California to prove they were realistic.

Such a program would give thousands of individuals and organizations the chance to participate in one of the most important overseas ventures of the American nation. In the process we could help create a broader political constituency for foreign aid. No longer would foreign aid be a remote endeavor through which a few anonymous bureaucrats in Washington hand over large chunks of taxpayers' money to equally remote people in some unknown capital. There is little doubt of the basic compassion of Americans toward other countries or of their interest in the people of foreign lands. Any foreign visitor who has lived here for a while can testify to that. But the current program does not touch these basic emotions, because it is abstract and removed. As a result, the foreign-aid program, morally imperative and vital to our interest, is doomed. It was that sense of impending doom which helped explain President Kennedy's interest. And the intervening years have seen a steady erosion of a most generous and necessary concept until its relationship to the problem is ludicrous, pitiful, and tragic. The 1966 election is an ominous augury that we may even be facing its extinction.

Another prospect for decentralization, and one closer to home, is the American city. We know that the problem of the cities is enormously complex. It is not one problem but a hundred: urban renewal and rehabilitation of rundown structures, new financing techniques and private development corporations, control of land speculation and new suburban slums, breaking up ghettos and giving people a place to play in, efficient transportation and mastery of the automobile. We may need to rebuild entire central cities or construct huge new satellite metropolises. The condition and future prospect of our cities are the greatest single threat to the quality of American life. Many who live in major urban areas are already the victims of conditions which confine, stifle, and degrade their daily existence to an extent unthinkable half a century ago. Nor is this a problem for the poor alone. They are the chief victims, but all must breathe the air, fight the traffic, do without nature, and worry about violence.

Instead of a scattered attack on particular prob-

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lems, we must begin by asking what kind of city we want to live in, and what kind of city we want for our children. As we approach the problem on this spacious scale, we see immediately that uncontrolled growth and change must be replaced by long-range planning which encompasses the entire urban area across municipal and state lines. And we see, too, that the cities do not have the money to meet their problems.

I believe we should adopt a Marshall Plan approach to the problems of the American city. Resources on a large scale would be made available to those urban areas which prepared a comprehensive program for future development, embracing urban policies as diverse as land use, housing codes, tax structures, and water systems. The federal government could give technical assistance in planning, set certain standards, and ensure that the program was being carried forward. But the basic responsibility for decision and action would rest with the city and its people. This would not only help meet the more general imperatives of decentralization, but would provide a powerful incentive for the cooperation across historic political jurisdictions which is the condition of effective action.

THERE ARE MANY other areas in which decentralization is possible. Anti-poverty and job-retraining programs should be increasingly handed over to community groups instead of being drawn, as they now are, closer to the federal government. Aid to education might well be administered to a far larger degree by local boards, subject only to the most general standards. Instead of threatening to draft all young Americans for public service, we could encourage and finance a host of varied volunteer groups to perform public services at the state and community level in order to provide an outlet for those many citizens still anxious to find an answer to the question, "What can you do for your country?" Many federal installations and services could well be subject to greater local supervision. For example, we might establish local boards of directors for post offices, permitting the community to decide, within the limits of available resources, the kind of postal service they require, even hire and fire postmasters and, at least, to air their complaints.

Much of this will appear sloppy and chaotic. Some of it will certainly be confused. It is always easier to yearn for the illusory neatness of central direction and control, under the assumption that it is more effective. That assumption has often proved wrong in the past, and it must now be questioned across the board of federal activity. Even if we do add to confusion, that is a small price to pay for the benefits of decentralization. Confusion may even turn out to be creative. In fact, I cannot remember a single unconfused government organization that ever produced an important new idea.

I do not assume that proposals such as these will cure what Norman Mailer calls "the plague" of modern life or halt the flow toward fragmentation and futility. Politics is only part of the story. The values, ideas, and instincts of our modern condition may be too relentless to yield, even slightly, to leadership and political invention. Perhaps the changes required are far more convulsive and profound than most of us can formulate. As a practicing politician, I can only hope for and speak of those things which seem to reach toward the limits of foreseeable possibility.

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PAUL THEROUX

ON COWARDICE

IN THE OLD days, fat young boys with nothing to do used to stand around drugstores talking excitedly of picking up girls. They now have other choices—they can pick up guns or protest-signs. I tend to take the druggist's view: have an ice cream and forget the choices. I intend to give in neither to the army nor to the peace movement.

I am now certain of my reason for thinking this: I am a coward.

It has not always been this way. I used to think I was a person of high principles. The crooked thing about high principles is that they can live in thin air. I am fairly sure mine did. For the past five years my reaction to anything military was based on borrowed shock.

I still believe that war is degrading, that it gets us no place, and that one must not hurt anyone else. The pacifists say this and the government calls them cowards. The pacifists protest that they are not cowards. I feel no kinship with the government. I have some sympathy for the folk who call themselves pacifists because I believe many of them to be as cowardly as I am. But I see no reason to be defensive about it. Certainly they should not have to put up with all that humiliation on the sidewalk. As cowards they should be entitled to a little peace. They should not have to waste their time and risk arrest scrawling slogans on the subway or walking for hours carrying heavy signs. Guns may be heavier, but why carry either one?

A soldier shuffled nervously in front of me while I stood in line at the East Side Airlines Terminal in New York almost two years ago. He turned abruptly and told me that he was going to Oakland, California. I told him I was going to London and then to Uganda. Harmless talk—the kind that travelers make with ease. He surprised me by breaking convention and continuing what should have been an ended conversation. After Oakland he would be going to Vietnam. I clucked at his misfortune and as we both thought presumably of death he said, "Somebody's got to go."

But not me, I thought. I got my ticket confirmed and a week later I was in Africa, far from the draft board, even farther from Vietnam. Five years ago I would have hectored the soldier with some soul-swelling arguments. I was a pacifist and a very noisy one at that.

When I was told that I must take ROTC at the University of Massachusetts in 1960 I refused. Then I tried to think why I had refused. I had no friends who were pacifists but I did not need a manual to tell me that I hated violence. I dreaded the thought of marching or taking guns apart; I quietly resolved never to go into the army, the ROTC, or anything that was vaguely military. The thought of wearing a uniform appalled me and the thought of being barked at frightened me. I wanted to write a big book and be left alone. In two hours I was a pacifist, a month later I was the only healthy non-Quaker at the University exempt from ROTC. A few years later I was arrested by the campus police for leading a demonstration (that was in 1962 when demonstrations were rare and actually bothered people). I bunched together with a dozen more pacifists, organized some more protests, and, the year I graduated, ROTC was put on a voluntary basis by a faculty committee. Although the committee was composed of friends of mine it was not really a put-up job. ROTC was just not consistent with high principles.

Before I was excused from ROTC I had to meet an *ad hoc* committee: the colonels of the army and the air force ROTC, the chaplain, and the provost. The army colonel, a man with a passion for writing patriotic letters to the student newspaper, listened to my woolly tirade against the military (quotations from Jesus, Norman Mailer, Tolstoy, and, if I am not mistaken, Eugene V. Debs). He rose, his medals jangled at me, and he thundered: "What do *you* know about war!"

It couldn't have been plainer, but for a pacifist it is an easy question to answer. "Nothing, but. . . ." And then the atrocity stories, a smattering of religion, and a few abstract nouns. I could have appealed to the governor if they had not let me out of ROTC. The governor was coming up for reelection and would not have not have wanted to appear a jingo by making me take ROTC or a Communist by excusing me. The committee quietly released me from my obligation.

If I had told them I was a coward they would not have wasted a minute with me. I would have been given regulation shoes and told to keep them clean; I would have been expected to know all the parts of an M-1 carbine; I would have had to stab sandbags with a bayonet every Tuesday after entomology class. So I did not tell them I was a coward, although that would have been the honest thing to do. The colonel, a man experienced in these matters, insinuated that I was one, but good taste prevented his speaking the word.

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THE ROTC has never done much more than bruise a man. Its contribution has been to teach college boys marching. Ironically, the people who object to ROTC end up marching many more miles than the sophomores on the parade ground. Peace movements are successful usually because they are so militaristic in organization and attitude. The language of the peace groups is always military-sounding: fighting, campaign, movement, ranks, marches—even freedom awards for valor. There is keen envy among the groups: which college has the most picketers, the bloodiest and most agonizing signs, which men have the handsome beards. Tempers are short among demonstrators; they have ridden a long way to be grim. The protester from the Amherst area gets off near the White House and begins grousing: "Jesis, we just *got here* and they expect us to start picketing!"

I was persuaded by a friend to picket in Times Square against nuclear testing one cold night in 1962. We had to report to a cigar-smoking gentleman who gave each of us a sign and instructions: "Walk clockwise, single file around the army recruiter booth. Remember, don't talk, don't stop walking, and if you want to leave just raise your hand and I'll get someone to carry your sign. Let's practice walking without the sign first, then we'll start. Okay, everyone line up here. . . ."

The little man did not carry a sign. He was the sergeant, we were the privates. He marched beside us and used his big cigar as a swagger stick. Every so often he would tell someone to pipe down or walk straight. We got off to a rough start, but soon got the hang of it, convincing me that, if nothing else, we responded well to discipline and would all have made pretty good soldiers.

Many pacifists I have known are scared out of their wits that they will be drafted. Is this fright caused by seeing moral laws broken and all Gandhi's hunger strikes made worthless by a man's head—or let's say, a pacifist's head—blown apart? Is the fright a fear of death or a fear of failed principles? Is the refusal to join in the slaughter inspired by feelings of cowardice or moral conviction? I am thinking of pacifists who have been taught their fear after being beaten up, threatened by armed boys, and seeing brutality up close.

I lived in a crowded suburb of a large city in the United States and I had to pass through an alley —the lights at the opposite end: salvation—to get a bus when I went to the movies. The last time I passed through that alley five figures came toward me. I knew they wanted to beat me up. I stood still and hoped they would pass by, although what I imagined—being surrounded, having the youngest one push me down in the snow and punch me while I curled up and groaned, hearing them laugh, and then running away until my throat ached—actually happened, and the next ten minutes were a blur of cruelty.

There have been other occasions. Once I was walking along a street in San Juan, Puerto Rico with a pregnant girl. An American sailor about the same size and age as myself stood in front of us and said to me, "Did you jam that broad?" His friend laughed and some people stopped to see what I would do. I slid away, glancing at his fists, and then hurried off, halfheartedly dragging the girl behind. I think if there had been a fight I would have torn myself away and left the girl to fend for herself. I brought the subject up later. I told her that I did not want to cause trouble in a large crowd, in a strange city. But she knew that I was frightened and that I would not let anger take the place of my fright.

This is really what a coward is, I believe: a person who is afraid of nearly everything and most of all afraid of anger. His own anger is a special danger to him. He accepts his solitary hardship and pays the price of withdrawing. He knows that each attempt to deal with violence may require summoning all the inhuman bravado he can contain. The bravery is a cover. Its weight intimidates the flesh beneath it. Since bravery implies a willingness to risk death, the fear to be brave becomes the fear to die. I am unable to understand what could make me risk death: neither patriotism, a desire to preserve anything, nor a hatred of anyone could rouse me to fight.

I have always wondered how people do things which require risk, whether there is not a gap in their consciousness, a suspension of judgment while the dangerous act is performed. I have never felt this release, even momentarily, from the consequences of risk. Remembered incidents intrude: street fights I could not bear to watch, threats I walked away from, vicious glares that made me sick, and some time ago being in a bar in Washington, D.C., where a woman on a stool kept calling the dishwasher a nigger. She leaned on the bar and slobbered: "You a nigger, ain't you? You know you are; you nothin but a nigger. You ain't no Creole like you say. You a nigger. . . ." And the Negro behind the bar whistled and looked at no one. I wanted to shout at the woman. But with a fear that quickly became nausea I left.

Leaving is a cure for nothing, though if one goes to the right spot he may have time to reflect usefully on why he left. Almost four years ago I joined the Peace Corps, was sent to Malawi, in Central Africa, and taught school. Unlike most people in their early twenties, I had personal servants, a big house, and good public relations. My relatives said I was really sacrificing and doing good work (there is a school of thought that assumes if one is in Africa he is, *ipso facto,* doing good work). I was happy in my job. I was not overworked. And I had joined the Peace Corps for what I now see were selfish reasons: I had thought of responsibilities I did not want—marriage seemed too permanent, graduate school too hard, and the army too brutal. The Peace Corps is a sort of Howard Johnson's on the main drag into maturity. Usually life is pleasant, sometimes

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difficult, occasionally violent. A good time to find out whether or not you are a coward.

VIOLENCE IN Malawi became common. The resignation of several high-ranking politicians and the firing of a few others threw the country into a nightmare of suspicion late in 1964. Many people suspected of collaborating with the ex-cabinet members were choked or hacked to death. One day I was walking home along the dirt road that led to my house. I saw smoke. Up ahead I saw three Youth Leaguers dashing into the bush. I knew they had just burned something, but I was not sure what it was. I was sure that it was serious and became worried. Just over the hill was a truck in flames. The cab of the truck was crackling and I could make out stiff black shapes in the holes of the flames. I detoured around the burning truck and went home. At home I had a drink, locked the door, and went to bed.

About a week later I was on a train and going North to the lake shore. At each stop, boys, Youth Leaguers anywhere from ten to forty years old, got on the train and demanded to see the party cards of the African travelers. If a person did not have a card he was beaten. An old man next to me was dragged out off his seat, thrown to the floor, and kicked. Just before they dragged him out of the seat he looked at me (we had been talking about how terrible it was that this thing was happening and I said that it made me very angry) and his hand reached out for my sleeve. I moved—a timid reflex—against the window and he missed my sleeve. They quickly got him onto the floor. His screams were terrific and he wept as they kicked him. No one in the car moved. Several minutes later, another and another were thrown to the floor and beaten. Outside the train a man was being chased and punched as he ran through a gauntlet of people. His hands were pushed against his face for protection. He reeled across the platform and bumped into a fence. I saw him huddled against the fence—the boys hitting him with sticks—as the train pulled away. I could not tell if he was screaming. I had closed the window. By the time the train had gone about a hundred miles, the car was almost empty; most of the occupants had been dragged out and beaten. I stepped out at my station and walked to a taxi. It was hard to suppress an intense feeling of relief. The cards that the men were being asked to produce were sold by the Youth Leaguers for two shillings. Many refused to buy them because they did not believe in the present regime and would not compromise their principles.

In August of 1965 I drove a car through the Northern region of Malawi. I passed through fourteen roadblocks and reached the border-post at about ten in the evening. The gate—the customs barrier—was closed. I saw some men standing near it. My headlights were still on and the windows of the car were rolled up. The men appeared to be saying something but I could not hear them. Only after a few moments did I realize that my headlights were shining into their eyes. I shut off the engine and rolled down the window. As soon as the window was open a crack I heard the loud shouting of the men. They stood where they were and ordered me out of the car. They raised their rifles to my face. When the guns were pointed at me my body started to shake, my legs felt as if they had gone suddenly boneless. I was numb. I knew I was about to be shot. I was waiting to be murdered. *If they're going to shoot me let them do it quickly!* flashed through my mind. The feeling of standing there on that border—a border that had been raided four times resulting in the deaths of many more people than even the large number reported in the press—in the darkness, the bullets crashing into my shirt, bursting through my back with a fist-sized collop of flesh and clotted blood, my body dropping into the sand by the light of a fizzing lantern, the men standing over me and firing into my inert body, my head broken open. . . . It was unbearable. And I had done nothing. I was innocent, my papers were in order, my passport was in my hand high above my head. But the guns! The shouting! I was so afraid that I think I could have been moved to action—I felt capable of killing them, or attempting it. Yet this would have been absurd because I had done nothing wrong. The guns remained pointed into my face. The feeling persisted: I wanted to shoot them or be shot. I wanted something to happen, something violent that would settle the whole affair.

They told me I must walk toward them. This I did, all the while trying to prevent myself from lunging at them in an attempt to incite them to shoot me and get it over with. But they did not shoot me. They swore at me and took me into the police station. I pleaded with them to let me through the barrier (I felt that as long as I remained on their side of the border I was guilty of something). I convinced them and that night drove until two in the morning along the narrow bush track into Tanzania.

When my Peace Corps stretch was over I decided to stay in Africa. I realized that there was violence in Africa, but I had started to understand it. I had reached two conclusions: one, the violence was either tribal or political—I had no tribe and was not involved in politics and so the violence was not directed against me; two, life in Africa is simple, provincial, dull generally but with stirrings here and there, evidence of growth that I might help with. Day-to-day life in Africa is much like day-to-day life in New Hampshire: people strolling through a clutter of flowers or standing around the local bar spitting on the sidewalk; there is gossip about love affairs and car-buying, there is time for talking or reading or writing. Sometimes there is trouble at the castle and the gunshots echo down through the huts. Trouble happens

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around powerful people, politicians and chiefs. I live among neither.

On my way to work, gliding through the green in my car, I think: *you can be drafted today*. I am twenty-five; I have bad eyes, but am otherwise physically fit. I have no wife. My job as a teacher here in Uganda may exempt me from the draft, but there is no guarantee of that. My draft board knows where I am. The President has said that he will again increase the number of troops in Vietnam. The war is a jumble of figures: the number of troops and planes, the number of bombings and raids, the number of dead or wounded. The numbers appear every day in the Uganda papers as cold as football scores. I add flesh and blood to them and I am afraid.

As a coward I can expect nothing except an even stronger insistence that I go and fight. *Fight whom?* A paradox emerges: the coward recognizes no enemies. Because he wants always to think that he will not be harmed (although he is plagued by the thought that he will be), there is no evil in his world. He wills evil out of his world. Evil is something that provokes feelings of cowardice in him; this feeling is unwelcome, he wants to forget it. In order to forget it he must not risk hating it. Indeed, the coward hates nothing just as he loves nothing. These emotions are a gamble for him; he merely tolerates them in others and tries to squash or escape them in himself. He will condemn no one when he is free from threat.

The word coward is loaded with awful connotations. It does not ordinarily lend itself to inclusion in logical discourse because it quickly inspires two assumptions. The first is that cowardice does not indicate how we really feel; the second is that we have principles which are in no way related to, and always more powerful than, our feelings, our flesh. The first assumption implies that the feeling of cowardice is somehow fraudulent; a coward is discounted as authentic because of the word's associations: it is allied to "tail" (Latin: *cauda*), one of its synonyms is "fainthearted" or, more plainly, "womanish." To accept this definition is to reach the conclusion that the coward's head will clear, that he will cease to become woman if he thinks a bit. The second assumption is that one's principles will overcome one's feelings. I would suggest, if my flesh is any indicator, that this is not the case.

Talking a mixture of rubbish and rhetoric to get out of ROTC, picketing the Military Ball, sympathizing with those Californians who were dragged down cement stairs by the police, their spines bumping over the edges, seeing some logic in Wolfgang Borchert's simple advice to pacifists (*"Sag, 'NEIN!' "*)—these are ego-inspired feelings; the ego fights for air, rejects absorption, anonymity, and death. Since we have perhaps far less dogma cluttering our lives than any other people in history, these ego-inspired feelings which can move us to acts of protest may prove essentially good, the principle of non-violence made out of a deep feeling of cowardice may prove the truest. It is bound to have its opposite motives: Cardinal Spellman's blessing of the war in Vietnam was one of these acts of the ego and certainly not the result of any biblical dogma *he* had been taught.

All of this goes against existing laws. It is illegal to be afraid to go into the army. If I tell the draft board to count me out because I am afraid they will answer, "That's impossible. . . ." But it is not impossible, it is only illegal, I will say; I saw a man die, I saw a man kicked to death, I held the crumbling blue body of a drowned man in my hands. . . . This is feeling; I will be asked for principles, not feelings. Fear is selfish and so no amount of fear, even if it stems from observed violence, is acceptable grounds for exemption.

Yet ours is not a military-minded nation; this is clear to everyone. The president of a Chicago draft board was quoted as saying a few months ago: "I've been threatened half-a-dozen times. Guys say they're gonna kill me if they see me on the street. . . ." Is it the thought that war is degrading and immoral that makes this half-dozen take the trouble to threaten the life of their draft board president? Or is it something else? We know we are terrible soldiers, that we are not bold; we have placed our trust in the hardware of war. ("Thank God for the atom bomb," my brother's sergeant said when he saw the platoon marching higgledy-piggledy across the parade ground.)

I say "we"—I mean "I." If I allow myself to be drafted into the army I will be committing suicide. The army is to a coward what a desert is to an agoraphobe, an elaborate torment from which the only escape serves to torment him further. The coward marches with death; the agoraphobe stalks the rolling dunes in search of an enclosure.

I SIT HERE in a cool dark room in the middle of Africa thousands of miles from the people in the city hall who want to draft me. I sit down in the middle of it all and try to decide why I do not want to go. And that is all anyone can do, try to be honest about what he feels, what he's seen or thinks he's seen. He can offer this disturbing vision to those who are not sure why they are unwilling. Folksongs and slogans and great heroes are no good for us now, and neither is the half-truth that is in every poem or every melodious sentence that hides the barbaric notions.

When I think of people trying to convince themselves that high principles result from merely hugging answers I think of the reverse of the old fairy story: a princess in her hunger kisses a handsome prince and turns him into a toad. The answers will not come by forcing ourselves upon dogma. The issue is that we should admit once and for all that we are frightened. We will not have told ourselves a lie and, after this truth which is a simple one, maybe even ugly, we can begin to ask new questions.

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LEO STRAUSS

JERUSALEM AND ATHENS

Some Introductory Reflections

I. The Beginning of the Bible and Its Greek Counterparts

ALL THE HOPES that we entertain in the midst of the confusion and dangers of the present are founded, positively or negatively, directly or indirectly, on the experiences of the past. Of these experiences, the broadest and deepest—so far as Western man is concerned—are indicated by the names of two cities: Jerusalem and Athens. Western man became what he is, and is what he is, through the coming together of biblical faith and Greek thought. In order to understand ourselves and to illuminate our trackless way into the future, we must understand Jerusalem and Athens. It goes without saying that this is a task whose proper performance goes much beyond my power; but we cannot define our tasks by our powers, for our powers become known to us through the performance of our tasks, and it is better to fail nobly than to succeed basely.

The objects to which we refer when we speak of Jerusalem and Athens are understood today, by the science devoted to such objects, as cultures; "culture" is meant to be a scientific concept. According to this concept there is an indefinitely large number of cultures: *n* cultures. The scientist who studies them beholds them as objects; as scientist, he stands outside all of them; he has no preference for any of them; he is not only impartial but objective; he is anxious not to distort any of them; in speaking about them he avoids any "culture-bound" concepts—i.e., concepts bound to any particular culture or kind of culture. In many cases the objects studied by the scientist of culture do or did not know that they are or were cultures. This causes no difficulty for him: electrons also do not know that they are electrons; even dogs do not know that they are dogs. By the mere fact that he speaks of his objects as cultures, the scientific student takes it for granted that he understands the people whom he studies better than they understood or understand themselves.

This whole approach has been questioned for some time, but the questioning does not seem to have had any effect on the scientists. The man who started the questioning was Nietzsche. We have said that according to the prevailing view there were or are *n* cultures. Let us say there were or are 1,001 cultures, thus reminding ourselves of the 1,001 Arabian Nights; the account of the cultures, if it is well done, will be a series of exciting stories, perhaps of tragedies. Accordingly, Nietzsche speaks of our subject in a speech by his Zarathustra that is entitled "Of 1,000 Goals and One." The Hebrews and the Greeks appear in this speech as two among a number of nations, not superior to the two others that are mentioned or to the 996 that are not. The peculiarity of the Greeks, according to Nietzsche, is the full dedication of the individual to the contest for excellence, distinction, supremacy. The peculiarity of the Hebrews is the utmost honoring of father and mother. Nietzsche's reverence for the sacred tables of the Hebrews, as well as for those of the other nations in question, is deeper than that of any other beholder. Yet since he too is only a beholder of these tables, since what one table commends or commands is incompatible with what others command, he himself is not subject to the commandments of any. This is true also and especially of the tables, or "values," of modern Western culture. But according to him, all scientific concepts, and hence in particular the concept of culture, are culture-bound; the concept of culture is an outgrowth of 19th-century Western culture; its application to the "cultures" of other ages and climates is an act stemming from the spiritual imperialism of that particular culture. There is, then, for Nietzsche, a glaring contradiction between the claimed objectivity of the science of cultures and the subjectivity of that science. To state the case differently, one cannot behold—i.e., truly understand—any culture unless one is firmly rooted in one's own culture or unless one belongs, in one's capacity as a beholder, to some culture. But if the universality of the beholding of all cultures is to be preserved, the cul-

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ture to which the beholder of all cultures belongs must be the universal culture, the culture of mankind, the world culture; the universality of beholding presupposes, if only by anticipating, the universal culture which is no longer one culture among many. Nietzsche sought therefore for a culture that would no longer be particular and hence in the last analysis arbitrary. The single goal of mankind is conceived by him as in a sense super-human: he speaks of the super-man of the future. The super-man is meant to unite in himself, on the highest level, both Jerusalem and Athens.

However much the science of all cultures may protest its innocence of all preferences or evaluations, it fosters a specific moral posture. Since it requires openness to all cultures, it fosters universal tolerance and the exhilaration which derives from the beholding of diversity; it necessarily affects all cultures that it can still affect by contributing to their transformation in one and the same direction; it willy-nilly brings about a shift of emphasis from the particular to the universal. By asserting, if only implicitly, the rightness of pluralism, it asserts that pluralism is *the* right way; it asserts the monism of universal tolerance and respect for diversity; for by virtue of being an "-ism," pluralism is a monism.

One remains somewhat closer to the science of culture as it is commonly practiced if one limits oneself to saying that every attempt to understand the phenomena in question remains dependent upon a conceptual framework that is alien to most of these phenomena and therefore necessarily distorts them. "Objectivity" can be expected only if one attempts to understand the various cultures or peoples exactly as they understand or understood themselves. Men of ages and climates other than our own did not understand themselves in terms of cultures because they were not concerned with culture in the present-day meaning of the term. What we now call culture is the accidental result of concerns that were not concerns with culture but with other things—above all with the Truth.

YET OUR intention to speak of Jerusalem and Athens seems to compel us to go beyond the self-understanding of either. Or is there a notion, a word that points to the highest that both the Bible and the greatest works of the Greeks claim to convey? There is such a word: wisdom. Not only the Greek philosophers but the Greek poets as well were considered to be wise men, and the Torah is said, *in* the Torah, to be "your wisdom in the eyes of the nations." We, then, must try to understand the difference between biblical wisdom and Greek wisdom. We see at once that each of the two claims to be the true wisdom, thus denying to the other its claim to be wisdom in the strict and highest sense. According to the Bible, the beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord; according to the Greek philosophers, the beginning of wisdom is wonder. We are thus compelled from the very beginning to make a choice, to take a stand. Where then do we stand? Confronted by the incompatible claims of Jerusalem and Athens, we are open to both and willing to listen to each. We ourselves are not wise but we wish to become wise. We are seekers for wisdom, "*philo-sophoi.*" Yet since we say that we wish to hear first and then to act or to decide, we have already decided in favor of Athens against Jerusalem.

This, indeed, seems to be the necessary position for all of us who cannot be Orthodox and therefore must accept the principle of the historical-critical study of the Bible. The Bible was traditionally understood to be the true and authentic account of the deeds of God and men from the beginning till the restoration after the Babylonian exile. The deeds of God include His legislation as well as His inspirations to the prophets, and the deeds of men include their praises of God and their prayers to Him as well as their God-inspired admonitions. Biblical criticism starts from the observation that the biblical account is in important respects not authentic but derivative or consists not of "histories" but of "memories of ancient histories," to borrow a Machiavellian expression. Biblical criticism reached its first climax in Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise*, which is frankly anti-theological; Spinoza read the Bible as he read the Talmud and the Koran. The result of his criticism can be summarized as follows: the Bible consists to a considerable extent of self-contradictory assertions, of remnants of ancient prejudices or superstitions, and of the outpourings of an uncontrolled imagination; in addition, it is poorly compiled and poorly preserved. He arrived at this conclusion by presupposing the impossibility of miracles. The considerable differences between 19th- and 20th-century biblical criticism and that of Spinoza can be traced to their difference in regard to the evaluation of imagination: whereas for Spinoza imagination is simply sub-rational, it was assigned a much higher rank in later times when it was understood as the vehicle of religious or spiritual experience, which necessarily expresses itself in symbols and the like. The historical-critical study of the Bible is the attempt to understand the various layers of the Bible as they were understood by their immediate addressees, i.e., the contemporaries of its authors. Of course, the Bible speaks of many things—for instance, the creation of the world—that for the biblical authors themselves belong to the remote past. But there is undoubtedly much history in the Bible—accounts of events written by contemporaries or near-contemporaries. One is thus led to say that the Bible contains both "myth" and "history." Yet this distinction is alien to the Bible; it is a special form of the Greek distinction between *mythos* and *logos*. From the

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point of view of the Bible, the "myths" are as true as the "histories": what Israel "in fact" did or suffered cannot be understood except in the light of the "facts" of Creation and Election. What is now called "historical" are those deeds and speeches that are equally accessible to the believer and to the unbeliever. But from the point of view of the Bible, the unbeliever is the fool who has said in his heart "there is no God"; the Bible narrates everything as it is credible to the wise in the biblical sense of wisdom. Let us never forget that there is no biblical word for doubt. The biblical signs and wonders convince men who have little faith or who believe in other gods; they are not addressed to "the fools who say in their hearts 'there is no God.'"

It is true that we cannot ascribe to the Bible the theological concept of miracles, for that concept presupposes the concept of nature, and the concept of nature is foreign to the Bible. One is, however, tempted to ascribe to the Bible what one may call the poetic concept of miracles as illustrated by Psalm 114:

> When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange tongue, Judah became his sanctuary and Israel his dominion. The sea saw and fled; the Jordan turned back. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs. What ails thee, sea, that thou fleest, thou Jordan that thou turnst back? Ye mountains that ye skip like rams, ye hills like lambs? From the presence of the Lord tremble thou earth, from the presence of the God of Jacob who turns the rock into a pond of water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

The presence of God calls forth from His creatures a conduct that differs strikingly from their ordinary conduct: it enlivens the lifeless; it makes fluid the fixed. It is not easy to say whether the author of the psalm did not mean his utterance to be simply or literally true. It is easy to say that the concept of poetry—as distinguished from that of song—is foreign to the Bible. It is perhaps more simple to say that owing to the victory of science over natural theology the impossibility of miracles can no longer be said to be established but has degenerated to the status of an undemonstrable hypothesis. One may trace to the hypothetical character of this fundamental premise the hypothetical character of many, not to say all, results of biblical criticism. Certain it is that biblical criticism in all its forms makes use of terms having no biblical equivalents and is to this extent unhistorical.

HOW THEN must we proceed? We shall not take issue with the findings or even the premises of biblical criticism. Let us grant that the Bible and in particular the Torah consists to a considerable extent of "memories of ancient histories," even of memories of memories. But memories of memories are not necessarily distorted or pale reflections of the original; they may be recollections of recollections, deepenings through meditation of the primary experience. We shall therefore take the latest and uppermost layer as seriously as the earlier ones. We shall start from the uppermost layer—from what is first for us, even though it may not be simply the first. We shall start, that is, where both the traditional and the historical study of the Bible necessarily start. In thus proceeding we avoid the compulsion to make an advance decision in favor of Athens against Jerusalem. For the Bible does not require us to believe in the miraculous character of events that the Bible does not present as miraculous. God's speaking to men may be described as miraculous, but the Bible does not claim that the putting-together of those speeches was done miraculously. We begin at the beginning, at the beginning of the beginning. The beginning of the beginning happens to deal with *the* beginning: the creation of heaven and earth. The Bible begins reasonably.

"IN THE BEGINNING God created heaven and earth." Who says this? We are not told; hence we do not know. We have no right to assume that God said it, for the Bible introduces God's sayings by expressions like "God said." We shall then assume that the words were spoken by a nameless man. Yet no man can have been an eyewitness of God's creating heaven and earth; the only eyewitness was God. Since "There did not arise in Israel a prophet like Moses whom the Lord saw face to face," it is understandable that tradition ascribed to Moses the sentence quoted and its whole sequel. But what is understandable or plausible is not as such certain. The narrator does not claim to have heard the account from God; perhaps he heard it from some man or men; perhaps he is retelling a tale. The Bible continues: "And the earth was unformed and void. . . ." It is not clear whether the earth thus described was created by God or antedated His creation. But it is quite clear that while speaking about how the earth looked at first, the Bible is silent about how heaven looked at first. The earth, i.e., that which is not heaven, seems to be more important than heaven. This impression is confirmed by the sequel.

God created everything in six days. On the first day He created light; on the second, heaven; on the third, the earth, the seas, and vegetation; on the fourth, the sun, the moon, and the stars; on the fifth, the water animals and the birds; and on the sixth, the land animals and man. The most striking difficulties are these: light and hence day (and nights) are presented as preceding the sun, and vegetation is presented as preceding the sun. The first difficulty is disposed of by the observation that creation-days are not sun-days. One must add at once, however, that there is a connection between the two kinds of days, for there is a connection, a correspondence between light and sun.

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The account of creation manifestly consists of two parts, the first part dealing with the first three creation-days and the second part dealing with the last three. The first part begins with the creation of light and the second with the creation of the heavenly light-givers. Correspondingly, the first part ends with the creation of vegetation and the second with the creation of man. All creatures dealt with in the first part lack local motion; all creatures dealt with in the second part possess local motion.* Vegetation precedes the sun because vegetation lacks local motion and the sun possesses it. Vegetation belongs to the earth; it is rooted in the earth; it is the fixed covering of the fixed earth.† Vegetation was brought forth by the earth at God's command; the Bible does not speak of God's "making" vegetation; but as regards the living beings in question, God commanded the earth to bring them forth and yet God "made" them. Vegetation was created at the end of the first half of the creation-days; at the end of the last half, the living beings that spend their whole lives on the firm earth were created. The living beings—beings that possess life in addition to local motion—were created on the fifth and sixth days, on the days following the day on which the heavenly light-givers were created. The Bible presents the creatures in an ascending order. Heaven is lower than earth. The heavenly light-givers lack life; they are lower than the lowliest living beast; they serve the living creatures, which are to be found only beneath heaven; they have been created in order to rule over day and night: they have not been made in order to rule over the earth, let alone over man.

The most striking characteristic of the biblical account of creation is its demoting or degrading of heaven and the heavenly lights. Sun, moon, and stars precede the living things because they are lifeless: they are not gods. What the heavenly lights lose, man gains; man is the peak of creation. The creatures of the first three days cannot change their places; the heavenly bodies change their places but not their courses; the living beings change their courses but not their "ways"; men alone can change their "ways." Man is the only being created in God's image. Only in the case of man's creation does the biblical account of creation repeatedly speak of God's "creating" him; in the case of the creation of heaven and the heavenly bodies, that account speaks of God's "making" them. Similarly, only in the case of man's creation does the Bible intimate that there is a multiplicity in God: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. . . . So God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." Bisexuality is not a preserve of man, but only man's bisexuality could give rise to the view that there are gods and goddesses: there is no biblical word for "goddess." Hence creation is not begetting. The biblical account of creation teaches silently what the Bible teaches elsewhere explicitly: there is only one God, the God whose name is written as the Tetragrammaton, the living God Who lives from ever to ever, Who alone has created heaven and earth and all their hosts; He has not created any gods and hence there are no gods besides Him. The many gods whom men worship are either nothings that owe such being as they possess to man's making them, or if they are something (like sun, moon, and stars), they surely are not gods.** All non-polemical references to "other gods" occurring in the Bible are fossils whose preservation indeed poses a question but only a rather unimportant one. Not only did the biblical God not create any gods; on the basis of the biblical account of creation, one could doubt whether He created any beings one would be compelled to call "mythical": heaven and earth and all their hosts are always accessible to man as man. One would have to start from this fact in order to understand why the Bible contains so many sections that, on the basis of the distinction between mythical (or legendary) and historical, would have to be described as historical.

ACCORDING TO THE Bible, creation was completed by, and culminated in, the creation of man. Only after the creation of man did God "see all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." What then is the origin of the evil or the bad? The biblical answer seems to be that since everything of divine origin is good, evil is of human origin. Yet if God's creation as a whole is very good, it does not follow that all its parts are good or that creation as a whole contains no evil whatsoever: God did not find all parts of His creation to be good. Perhaps creation as a whole cannot be "very good" if it does not contain some evils. There cannot be light if there is not darkness, and the darkness is as much created as is the light: God creates evil as well as He makes peace (Isaiah 45:7). However this may be, the evils whose origin the Bible lays bare, after it has spoken of creation, are a particular kind of evils: the evils that beset man. Those evils are not due to creation or implicit in it, as the Bible shows by setting forth man's original condition. In order to set forth that condition, the Bible must retell man's creation by making man's creation as much as possible the sole theme. This second account answers the question, not of how heaven and earth and all their hosts have come into being but of how human life as we know it—beset with evils with which it was not beset originally—has come

* Cf. U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, Part I, Jerusalem, 1961, p. 42.

† Cf. the characterization of the plants as ἔγγεια ("in or of the earth") in Plato's *Republic*, 491 d 1. Cf. Empedocles A 70.

** Cf. the distinction between the two kinds of "other gods" in Deut. 4:15-19, between the idols on the one hand and sun, moon, and stars on the other.

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into being. This second account may only supplement the first account but it may also correct it and thus contradict it. After all, the Bible never teaches that one can speak about creation without contradicting oneself. In post-biblical parlance, the mysteries of the Torah *(sithre torah)* are the contradictions of the Torah; the mysteries of God are the contradictions regarding God.

THE FIRST account of creation ended with man; the second account begins with man. According to the first account, God created man and only man in His image; according to the second account, God formed man from the dust of the earth and He blew into his nostrils the breath of life. The second account makes clear that man consists of two profoundly different ingredients, a high one and a low one. According to the first account, it would seem that man and woman were created simultaneously; according to the second account, man was created first. The life of man as we know it, the life of most men, is that of tillers of the soil; their life is needy and harsh. If human life had been needy and harsh from the very beginning, man would have been compelled or at least almost irresistibly tempted to be harsh, uncharitable, unjust; he would not have been fully responsible for his lack of charity or justice. But man is to be fully responsible. Hence the harshness of human life must be due to man's fault. His original condition must have been one of ease: he was not in need of rain nor of hard work; he was put by God into a well-watered garden that was rich in trees that were good for food. Yet while man was created for a life of ease, he was not created for a life of luxury: there was no gold or precious stones in the garden of Eden. Man was created for a simple life. Accordingly, God permitted him to eat of every tree of the garden except the tree of knowledge of good and evil, "for in the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die." Man was not denied knowledge; without knowledge he could not have known the tree of knowledge, nor the woman, nor the brutes; nor could he have understood the prohibition. Man was denied knowledge of good and evil, i.e., the knowledge sufficient for guiding himself, his life. Though not being a child, he was to live in childlike simplicity and obedience to God. We are free to surmise that there is a connection between the demotion of heaven in the first account and the prohibition against eating of the tree of knowledge in the second. While man was forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge, he was not forbidden to eat of the tree of life.

Man, lacking knowledge of good and evil, was content with his condition and in particular with his loneliness. But God, possessing knowledge of good and evil, found that "it is not *good* for man to be alone, so I will make him a helper as his counterpart." So God formed the brutes and brought them to man, but they proved not to be the desired helpers. Thereupon God formed the woman out of a rib of the man. The man welcomed her as bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh but, lacking knowledge of good and evil, he did not call her good. The narrator adds that "therefore [namely because the woman is bone of man's bone and flesh of his flesh] a man leaves his father and his mother, and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." Both were naked but, lacking knowledge of good and evil, they were not ashamed.

Thus the stage was set for the fall of our first parents. The first move came from the serpent, the most cunning of all the beasts of the field; it seduced the woman into disobedience and then the woman seduced the man. The seduction moves from the lowest to the highest. The Bible does not tell what induced the serpent to seduce the woman into disobeying the divine prohibition. It is reasonable to assume that the serpent acted as it did because it was cunning, i.e., possessed a low kind of wisdom, a congenital malice; everything that God had created would not be very good if it did not include something congenitally bent on mischief. The serpent begins its seduction by suggesting that God might have forbidden man and woman to eat of any tree in the garden, i.e., that God's prohibition might be malicious or impossible to comply with. The woman corrects the serpent and in so doing makes the prohibition more stringent than it was: "We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden; it is only about the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: you shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die."

Now, God did not forbid the man to *touch* the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Besides, the woman does not explicitly speak of the tree of knowledge; she may have had in mind the tree of life. Moreover, God had issued the prohibition only to the man, whereas the woman claims that God had spoken to her as well; she surely knew the divine prohibition only through human tradition. The serpent assures her that they will not die, "for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." The serpent tacitly questions God's veracity. At the same time it glosses over the fact that eating of the tree involves disobedience to God. In this it is followed by the woman. According to the serpent's assertion, knowledge of good and evil makes man immune to death (although we cannot know whether the serpent believes this). But the woman, having forgotten the divine prohibition, having therefore in a manner tasted of the tree of knowledge, is no longer wholly unaware of good and evil: she "saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise"; therefore she took of its fruit and ate. She thus made the fall of the man almost inevitable, for he was cleaving to her:

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she gave some of the fruit of the tree to the man, and he ate. The man drifts into disobedience by following the woman. After they had eaten of the tree, their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons: through the fall they became ashamed of their nakedness; eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil made them realize that nakedness is evil.

THE BIBLE says nothing to the effect that our first parents fell because they were prompted by the desire to be like God; they did not rebel highhandedly against God; rather, they forgot to obey God; they drifted into disobedience. Nevertheless, God punished them severely. But the punishment did not do away with the fact that, as God Himself said, as a consequence of his disobedience "man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil." There was now the danger that man might eat of the tree of life and live forever. Therefore God expelled him from the garden and made it impossible for him to return to it. One may wonder why man, while he was still in the garden of Eden, had not eaten of the tree of life of which he had not been forbidden to eat. Perhaps he did not think of it because, lacking knowledge of good and evil, he did not fear to die and, besides, the divine prohibition drew his attention away from the tree of life to the tree of knowledge.

The Bible intends to teach that man was meant to live in simplicity, without knowledge of good and evil. But the narrator seems to be aware of the fact that a being which can be forbidden to strive for knowledge of good and evil, i.e., that can understand to some degree that knowledge of good and evil is evil for it, necessarily possesses such knowledge. Human suffering from evil presupposes human knowledge of good and evil and vice versa. Man wishes to live without evil. The Bible tells us that he was given the opportunity to live without evil and that he cannot blame God for the evils from which he suffers. By giving man that opportunity, God convinces him that his deepest wish cannot be fulfilled. The story of the fall is the first part of the story of God's education of man.

Man has to live with knowledge of good and evil and with the sufferings inflicted on him because of that knowledge or its acquisition. Human goodness or badness presupposes that knowledge and its concomitants. The Bible gives us the first inkling of human goodness and badness in the story of the first brothers. The older brother, Cain, was a tiller of the soil; the younger brother, Abel, a keeper of sheep. God preferred the offering of the keeper of sheep, who brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock, to that of the tiller of the soil. There were many reasons for this preference but one of them seems to be that the pastoral life is closer to original simplicity than the life of the tillers of the soil. Cain, however was vexed, and despite his having been warned by God against sinning in general, killed his brother. After a futile attempt to deny his guilt—an attempt that increased that guilt ("Am I my brother's keeper?")—he was cursed by God as the serpent and the soil had been after the Fall, in contradistinction to Adam and Eve who were not cursed. He was punished by God, but not with death: anyone slaying Cain would be punished much more severely than Cain himself. The relatively mild punishment of Cain cannot be explained by the fact that murder had not been expressly forbidden: Cain possessed some knowledge of good and evil, and he knew that Abel was his brother, even assuming that he did not know that man was created in the image of God. It is better to explain Cain's punishment by assuming that punishments were milder in the beginning than later on. Cain—like his fellow fratricide, Romulus—founded a city, and some of his descendants were the ancestors of men practicing various arts: the city and the arts, so alien to man's original simplicity, owe their origin to Cain and his race rather than to Seth, the substitute for Abel, and his race. It goes without saying that this is not the last word of the Bible on the city and the arts but it is its first word, just as the prohibition against eating of the tree of knowledge is, one may say, its first word simply, and the revelation of the Torah—i.e., the highest kind of knowledge of good and evil that is vouchsafed to men—is its last word. The account of the race of Cain culminates in the song of Lamech who boasted to his wives of his slaying of men, of his being superior to God as an avenger. The (antediluvian) race of Seth cannot boast of a single inventor; its only distinguished members were Enoch, who walked with God, and Noah, who was a righteous man and walked with God: civilization and piety are two very different things.

By the time of Noah the wickedness of man had become so great that God repented of His creation of man and all other earthly creatures, Noah alone excepted; so He brought on the flood. Generally speaking, prior to the flood, man's lifespan was much longer than after it. Man's antediluvian longevity was a relic of his original condition. Man originally lived in the garden of Eden where he could have eaten of the tree of life and thus become immortal. The longevity of antediluvian man reflects this lost chance. To this extent the transition from antediluvian to postdiluvian man is a decline. This impression is confirmed by the fact that before the flood rather than after it the sons of God consorted with the daughters of man and thus generated the mighty men of old, the men of renown. On the other hand, the fall of our first parents made possible or necessary in due time God's revelation of His Torah, and this was decisively prepared, as we shall see, by the flood. In this respect, the transi-

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tion from antediluvian to postdiluvian mankind is a progress. The ambiguity regarding the Fall—the fact that it was a sin and hence avoidable and that it was at the same time inevitable—is reflected in the ambiguity regarding the status of antediluvian mankind.

The link between antediluvian mankind and the revelation of the Torah is supplied by the first covenant between God and men, the covenant following the flood. The flood was the proper punishment for the extreme and well-nigh universal wickedness of antediluvian men. Prior to the flood, mankind lived, so to speak, without restraint, without law. While our first parents were still in the garden of Eden, they were not forbidden anything except to eat of the tree of knowledge. The vegetarianism of antediluvian men was not due to an explicit prohibition (Gen. 1:29); rather, their abstention from meat belongs together with their abstention from wine (cf. 9:20); both were relics of man's original simplicity. After the expulsion from the garden of Eden, God did not punish men, apart from the relatively mild punishment which He inflicted on Cain. Nor did He establish human judges. God experimented, as it were, for the instruction of mankind, with the possibility of mankind's living free of the law. The experiment, just like the experiment of having men remain like innocent children, ended in failure. Fallen or awake man needs restraint, must live under law. But this law must not be simply imposed. It must form part of a covenant in which God and man are equally, though not equal, partners. Such a partnership was established only after the flood; it did not exist in antediluvian times either before or after the fall.

THE INEQUALITY regarding the covenant is shown especially by the fact that when God undertook never again to destroy almost all life on earth as long as the earth lasts, He did not do so on the condition that all or almost all men obey the laws promulgated by God after the flood: God makes His promise despite, or because of, His knowing that the devisings of man's heart are evil from his youth. Noah is the ancestor of all later men just as Adam was; the purgation of the earth through the flood is to some extent a restoration of mankind to its original state; it is a kind of second creation. Within the limits indicated, the condition of postdiluvian men is superior to that of antediluvian men. One point requires special emphasis: in the legislation following the flood, murder is expressly forbidden and made punishable by death on the ground that man was created in the image of God (9:6). The first covenant brought an increase in hope and at the same time an increase in punishment. Not until after the flood was man's rule over the beasts, ordained or established from the beginning, to be accompanied by the beasts' fear and dread of man (cf. 9:2 with 1:26-30 and 2:15).

The covenant following the flood prepares the covenant with Abraham. The Bible singles out three events that took place between the covenant after the flood and God's calling of Abraham: Noah's curse of Canaan, a son of Ham; the achievement of excellence by Nimrod, a grandson of Ham; and men's attempt to prevent their dispersal over the earth by building a city which had a tower that reached to the heavens. Canaan, whose land came to be the promised land, was cursed because Ham saw the nakedness of his father, Noah—because Ham transgressed a most sacred, if unpromulgated, law; the curse of Canaan was accompanied by the blessing of Shem and Japheth who turned their eyes away from the nakedness of their father. Here we have the first and the most fundamental division of mankind, at any rate of postdiluvian mankind, the division into "cursed" and "blessed." Nimrod was the first to be a mighty man on earth—a mighty hunter before the Lord; his kingdom included Babel (big kingdoms are attempts to overcome by force the division of mankind, conquest and hunting being akin to each other). The city that men built in order to remain together and thus to make a name for themselves was Babel; God scattered them by confounding their speech, by bringing about the division of mankind into groups that could not understand one another: into nations, i.e., groups united not only by descent but also by language. The division of mankind into nations may be described as a milder alternative to the flood.

The three events that took place between God's covenant with mankind after the flood and His calling of Abraham point to God's way of dealing with men who know good and evil and devise evil from their youth. Well-nigh universal wickedness will no longer be punished with well-nigh universal destruction, but will be prevented through the division of mankind into nations. Mankind will be divided, not into the cursed and the blessed (the curses and blessings were Noah's, not God's), but into a chosen nation and into nations that are not chosen. The emergence of nations made it possible to replace Noah's Ark—which floated alone on the waters covering the entire earth—by a whole, numerous nation living in the midst of the nations covering the earth. The election of the holy nation begins with the election of Abraham. Noah was distinguished from his contemporaries by his righteousness; Abraham separates himself from his contemporaries and in particular from his country and kindred at God's command—a command accompanied by God's promise to make of him a great nation. The Bible does not say that this primary election of Abraham was preceded by the fact of Abraham's righteousness. However this may be, Abraham shows his righteousness by obeying God's command at once, by trusting in God's promise whose fulfillment he could not possibly

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live to see, given the short lifespan of postdiluvian man: only after Abraham's offspring would have become a great nation would the land of Canaan be given to them forever.

The fulfillment of the promise required that Abraham not remain childless, and he was already quite old. Accordingly, God promised him that he would have issue. It was Abraham's trust in God's promise that, above everything else, made him righteous in the eyes of the Lord. It was God's intention that His promise be fulfilled through the offspring of Abraham and his wife Sarah. But this promise seemed laughable to Abraham, to say nothing of Sarah: Abraham was one hundred years old and Sarah, ninety. Yet nothing is too wondrous for the Lord. The laughable announcement became a joyous one. It was followed immediately by God's announcement to Abraham of His concern with the wickedness of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. God did not yet know whether those people were as wicked as they were said to be. But they might be; they might deserve total destruction as much as did the generation of the flood. Noah had accepted the destruction of his generation without any questioning. Abraham, however, who had a deeper trust in God, in God's righteousness, and a deeper awareness of his being only dust and ashes, presumed in fear and trembling to appeal to God's righteousness lest He, the judge of the whole earth, destroy the righteous along with the wicked. In response to Abraham's insistent pleading, God as it were promised to Abraham that He would not destroy Sodom if ten righteous men could be found in the city: He would save the city for the sake of the ten righteous men within it. Abraham acted as the mortal partner in God's righteousness; he acted as if he had some share in the responsibility for God's acting righteously. No wonder God's covenant with Abraham was incomparably more incisive than His covenant immediately following the flood.

ABRAHAM'S TRUST in God thus appears to be the trust that God in His righteousness will not do anything incompatible with His righteousness and that while, or because, nothing is too wondrous for the Lord, there are firm boundaries set to Him by His own righteousness, by Himself. This awareness is deepened and therewith modified by the last and severest test of Abraham's trust: God's command to him to sacrifice Isaac, his only son by Sarah. Abraham's supreme test presupposes the wondrous character of Isaac's birth: the very son who was to be the sole link between Abraham and the chosen people and who was born against all reasonable expectations, was to be sacrificed by his father. This command contradicted not only the divine promise, but also the divine prohibition against the shedding of innocent blood. Yet Abraham did not argue with God as he had done in the case of Sodom's destruction. In the case of Sodom, Abraham was not confronted with a divine command to do a certain thing and more particularly he was not confronted with a command to surrender to God what was dearest to him: Abraham did not argue with God for the preservation of Isaac because he loved God—not himself or his most cherished hope—with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might. The same concern with God's righteousness that had induced him to plead with God for the preservation of Sodom if ten just men could be found in that city, induced him not to plead for the preservation of Isaac, for God rightfully demands that He alone be loved unqualifiedly. The fact that the command to sacrifice Isaac contradicted the prohibition against the shedding of innocent blood must be understood in the light of the difference between human justice and divine justice: God alone is unqualifiedly, if unfathomably, just. God promised Abraham that He would spare Sodom if ten righteous men could be found in it, and Abraham was satisfied with this promise; He did not promise that He would spare the city if nine righteous men were found in it; would those nine be destroyed together with the wicked? And even if all Sodomites were wicked and hence justly destroyed, did their infants who were destroyed with them deserve their destruction? The apparent contradiction between the command to sacrifice Isaac and the divine promise to the descendants of Isaac is disposed of by the consideration that nothing is too wondrous for the Lord. Abraham's supreme trust in God, his simple, singleminded, childlike faith was rewarded although, or because, it presupposed his entire unconcern with any reward, for Abraham was willing to forgo, to destroy, to kill the only reward with which he was concerned: God prevented the sacrifice of Isaac. Abraham's intended action needed a reward although he was not concerned with a reward because his intended action cannot be said to have been intrinsically rewarding. The preservation of Isaac is as wondrous as his birth. These two wonders illustrate more clearly than anything else the origin of the holy nation.

The God Who created heaven and earth, Who is the only God, Whose only image is man, Who forbade man to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Who made a covenant with mankind after the flood and thereafter a convenant with Abraham which became His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—what kind of God is He? Or, to speak more reverently and more adequately, what is His name? This question was addressed to God Himself by Moses when he was sent by Him to the sons of Israel. God replied: "*Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh*," which is most often translated: "I am That (Who) I am." I believe, however, that we ought to render this statement, "I shall be What I shall be," thus preserving the connection between God's name and the fact that

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He makes covenants with men, i.e., that He reveals Himself to men above all by His commandments and by His promises and His fulfillment of those promises. "I shall be What I shall be" is, as it were, explained in the verse (Ex. 33:19), "I shall be gracious to whom I shall be gracious and I shall show mercy to whom I shall show mercy." God's actions cannot be predicted, unless He Himself has predicted them, i.e., promised them. But as is shown precisely by the account of Abraham's binding of Isaac, the way in which He fulfills His promises cannot be known in advance. The biblical God is a mysterious God: He comes in a thick cloud (Ex. 19:4); He cannot be seen; His presence can be sensed but not always and everywhere; what is known of Him is only what He chose to communicate by His word through His chosen servants. The rest of the chosen people knows His word—apart from the Ten Commandments (Deut. 4:12 and 5:4-5)—only mediately and does not wish to know it immediately (Ex. 20:19, and 21, 24:1-2; Deut. 10:15-18; Amos 3:7). For almost all purposes the word of God as revealed to His prophets and especially to Moses became *the* source of knowledge of good and evil, the true tree of knowledge which is at the same time the tree of life.

HAVING SAID this much about the beginning of the Bible and what it entails, let us now cast a glance at some Greek counterparts to the beginning of the Bible—to begin with, at Hesiod's *Theogony* as well as the remains of Parmenides's and Empedocles's works. They are all the works of known authors. This does not mean that they are, or present themselves as being, merely human. Hesiod sings what the Muses, the daughters of Zeus who is the father of gods and men, taught him or commanded him to sing. One could say that the Muses vouch for the truth of Hesiod's song, were it not for the fact that they sometimes speak lies which resemble what is true. Parmenides transmits the teaching of a goddess, and so does Empedocles. Yet these men composed their books; their songs or speeches are books. The Bible, on the other hand, is not a book. The most one could say is that it is a collection of books. The author of a book, in the strict sense of the term, excludes everything that is not necessary, that does not fulfill a function necessary to the purpose his book is meant to fulfill. The compilers of the Bible as a whole and of the Torah in particular seem to have followed an entirely different rule. Confronted with a variety of pre-existing holy speeches, which as such had to be treated with the utmost respect, they excluded only what could not by any stretch of the imagination be rendered compatible with the fundamental and authoritative teaching; their very piety, aroused and fostered by the pre-existing holy speeches, led them to make such changes in those holy speeches as they did make. Their work may then abound in contradictions and repetitions that no one ever intended as such, whereas in a book in the strict sense there is nothing that is not intended by the author.

Hesiod's *Theogony* sings of the generation or begetting of the gods; the gods were not "made" by anybody. Far from having been created by a god, earth and heaven are the ancestors of the immortal gods. More precisely, according to Hesiod everything that is has come to be. First there arose Chaos, Gaia (Earth), and Eros. Gaia gave birth first to Ouranos (Heaven) and then, mating with Ouranos, she brought forth Kronos and his brothers and sisters. Ouranos hated his children and did not wish them to come to life. At the wish and advice of Gaia, Kronos deprived his father of his generative power and thus unintentionally brought about the emergence of Aphrodite; Kronos became the king of the gods. Kronos's evil deed was avenged by his son Zeus whom he had generated by mating with Rheia and whom he had planned to destroy; Zeus dethroned his father and thus became the king of the gods, the father of gods and men, the mightiest of all gods. Given his ancestors it is not surprising that while he is the father of men and belongs to the gods who are the givers of good things, he is far from being kind to men. Mating with Mnemosyne, the daughter of Gaia and Ouranos, Zeus generated the nine Muses. The Muses give sweet and gentle eloquence and understanding to the kings whom they wish to honor. Through the Muses there are singers on earth, just as through Zeus there are kings. While kingship and song may go together, there is a profound difference between the two—a difference that, guided by Hesiod, one may compare to that between the hawk and the nightingale. Surely Metis (Wisdom), while being Zeus's first spouse and having become inseparable from him, is not identical with him; the relation of Zeus and Metis may remind one of the relation of God and wisdom in the Bible.

Hesiod speaks of the creation or making of men not in the *Theogony* but in his *Works and Days*, i.e., in the context of his speeches regarding how man should live, regarding man's right life, which includes the teaching regarding the right seasons (the "days"); the question of the right life does not arise regarding the gods. The right life for man is the just life, the life devoted to working, especially to tilling the soil. Work thus understood is a blessing ordained by Zeus who blesses the just and crushes the proud: often even a whole city is destroyed for the deeds of a single bad man. Yet Zeus takes cognizance of men's justice and injustice only if he so wills. Accordingly, work appears to be not a blessing but a curse: men must work because the gods keep hidden from them the means of life and they do this in order to punish them for Prometheus's theft of fire—a theft inspired by philanthropy. But was

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not Prometheus's action itself prompted by the fact that men were not properly provided for by the gods and in particular by Zeus? Be this as it may, Zeus did not deprive men of the fire that Prometheus had stolen for them; he punished them by sending them Pandora and her box, that was filled with countless evils like hard labor. The evils with which human life is beset cannot be traced to human sin. Hesiod conveys the same message by his story of the five races of men which came into being successively. The first of these, the golden race, was made by the gods while Kronos was still ruling in heaven. These men lived without toil or grief; they had all good things in abundance because the earth by itself gave them abundant fruit. Yet the men made by father Zeus lack this bliss. Hesiod does not make clear whether this is due to Zeus's ill-will or to his lack of power; he gives us no reason to think that it is due to man's sin. He creates the impression that human life becomes ever more miserable as one race of men succeeds another: there is no divine promise, supported by the fulfillment of earlier divine promises, that permits one to trust and to hope.

The most striking difference between the poet Hesiod and the philosophers Parmenides and Empedocles is that according to the philosophers, not everything has come into being: that which truly is, has not come into being and does not perish. This does not necessarily mean that what exists always is a god or gods. For if Empedocles calls one of the eternal four elements Zeus, this Zeus has hardly anything in common with what Hesiod, or the people generally, understood by Zeus. At any rate, according to both philosophers, the gods as ordinarily understood have come into being, just like heaven and earth, and will therefore perish again.

At the time when the opposition between Jerusalem and Athens reached the level of what one may call its classical struggle, in the 12th and 13th centuries, philosophy was represented by Aristotle. The Aristotelian god, like the biblical God, is a thinking being, but in opposition to the biblical God he is *only* a thinking being, pure thought: pure thought that thinks itself and only itself. Only by thinking himself and nothing but himself does he rule the world. He surely does not rule by giving orders and laws. Hence he is not a creator-god: the world is as eternal as god. Man is not his image: man is much lower in rank than other parts of the world. For Aristotle it is almost a blasphemy to ascribe justice to his god; he is above justice as well as injustice.

IT HAS OFTEN been said that the philosopher who comes closest to the Bible is Plato. This was said not least during the classical struggle between Jerusalem and Athens in the Middle Ages. Both Platonic philosophy and biblical piety are animated by the concern with purity and purification: "pure reason" in Plato's sense is closer to the Bible than "pure reason" in Kant's sense or for that matter in Anaxagoras's and Aristotle's sense. Plato teaches, just as the Bible does, that heaven and earth were created or made by an invisible God whom he calls the Father, who is eternal, who is good, and hence whose creation is good. The coming-into-being and the preservation of the world that he has created depend on the will of its maker. What Plato himself calls theology consists of two teachings: (1) God is good and hence in no way the cause of evil; (2) God is simple and hence unchangeable. On the question of divine concern with men's justice and injustice, Platonic teaching is in fundamental agreement with biblical teaching; it even culminates in a statement that agrees almost literally with biblical statements.* Yet the differences between the Platonic and biblical teachings are no less striking than the similarities. The Platonic teaching on creation does not claim to be more than a likely tale. The Platonic God is a creator also of gods, of visible living beings, i.e., of the stars; the created gods rather than the creator God create the mortal living beings and in particular man; heaven is a blessed god. The Platonic God does not create the world by his word; he creates it after having looked to the eternal ideas which therefore are higher than he. In accordance with this, Plato's explicit theology is presented within the context of the first discussion of education in the *Republic*, within the context of what one may call the discussion of elementary education; in the second and final discussion of education—the education of philosophers—theology is replaced by the doctrine of ideas. As for the thematic discussion of providence in the *Laws*, it may suffice here to say that it occurs within the context of the discussion of penal law.

In his likely tale of how God created the visible whole, Plato makes a distinction between two kinds of gods, the visible cosmic gods and the traditional gods—between the gods who revolve manifestly, i.e., who manifest themselves regularly, and the gods who manifest themselves so far as they will. The least one would have to say is that according to Plato the cosmic gods are of much higher rank than the traditional gods, the Greek gods. Inasmuch as the cosmic gods are accessible to man as man—to his observations and calculations—whereas the Greek gods are accessible only to the Greeks through Greek tradition, one may, in comic exaggeration, ascribe the worship of the cosmic gods to barbarians. This ascription is made in a manner and with an intention altogether non-comic in the Bible: Israel is forbidden to worship the sun and the moon and the stars which the Lord has allotted to the other peoples everywhere under heaven. This implies that the

* Compare Plato's *Laws* 905 a 4-b 2 with Amos 9:1-3 and Psalm 139:7-10.

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worship of the cosmic gods by other peoples, the barbarians, is not due to a natural or rational cause, to the fact that those gods are accessible to man as man, but to an act of God's will. It goes without saying that according to the Bible the God Who manifests Himself as far as He wills, Who is not universally worshipped as such, is the only true God. The Platonic statement taken in conjunction with the biblical statement brings out the fundamental opposition of Athens at its peak to Jerusalem: the opposition of the God or gods of the philosophers to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the opposition of reason and revelation.

II. On Socrates and the Prophets

FIFTY YEARS AGO, in the middle of World War I, Hermann Cohen, the greatest representative of, and spokesman for, German Jewry, the most powerful figure among the German professors of philosophy of his time, stated his view on Jerusalem and Athens in a lecture entitled "The Social Ideal in Plato and the Prophets." He repeated that lecture shortly before his death, and we may regard it as stating his final view on Jerusalem and Athens and therewith on *the* truth. For, as Cohen says right at the beginning, "Plato and the prophets are the two most important sources of modern culture." Being concerned with "the social ideal," he does not say a single word about Christianity in the whole lecture.

Cohen's view may be restated as follows. *The* truth is the synthesis of the teachings of Plato and the prophets. What we owe to Plato is the insight that the truth is in the first place the truth of science but that science must be supplemented, overarched, by the idea of the good which to Cohen means, not God, but rational, scientific ethics. The ethical truth must not only be compatible with the scientific truth; the ethical truth *needs* the scientific truth. The prophets are very much concerned with knowledge: with the knowledge of God. But this knowledge, as the prophets understood it, has no connection whatever with scientific knowledge; it is knowledge only in a metaphorical sense. It is perhaps with a view to this fact that Cohen speaks once of the divine Plato but never of the divine prophets. Why then can he not leave matters at Platonic philosophy? What is the fundamental defect of Platonic philosophy that is remedied by the prophets and only by the prophets? According to Plato, the cessation of evil requires the rule of the philosophers, of the men who possess the highest kind of human knowledge, i.e., of science in the broadest sense of the term. But this kind of knowledge like, to some extent, all scientific knowledge, is, according to Plato, the preserve of a small minority: of the men who possess a certain nature and certain gifts that most men lack. Plato presupposes that there is an unchangeable human nature and, as a consequence, a fundamental structure of the good human society which is unchangeable. This leads him to assert or to assume that there will be wars as long as there will be human beings, that there ought to be a class of warriors and that the class ought to be higher in rank and honor than the class of producers and exchangers. These defects in Plato's system are remedied by the prophets precisely because they lack the idea of science and hence the idea of nature, and therefore they can believe that men's conduct toward one another can undergo a change much more radical than any change ever dreamed of by Plato.

Cohen brought out very well the antagonism between Plato and the prophets. Nevertheless we cannot leave matters at his view of that antagonism. Cohen's thought belongs to the world preceding World War I, and accordingly reflects a greater faith in the power of modern Western culture to mold the fate of mankind than seems to be warranted now. The worst things experienced by Cohen were the Dreyfus scandal and the pogroms instigated by Tsarist Russia: he did not experience Communist Russia and Hitler Germany. More disillusioned than he regarding modern culture, we wonder whether the two separate ingredients of modern culture, of the modern synthesis, are not more solid than the synthesis itself. Catastrophes and horrors of a magnitude hitherto unknown, which we have seen and through which we have lived, were better provided for, or made intelligible, by both Plato and the prophets than by the modern belief in progress. Since we are less certain than Cohen was that the modern synthesis is superior to its pre-modern ingredients, and since the two ingredients are in fundamental opposition to each other, we are ultimately confronted by a problem rather than by a solution.

More particularly, Cohen understood Plato in the light of the opposition between Plato and Aristotle—an opposition that he understood in turn in the light of the opposition between Kant and Hegel. We, however, are more impressed than Cohen was by the kinship between Plato and Aristotle on the one hand and the kinship between Kant and Hegel on the other. In other words, the quarrel between the ancients and the moderns seems to us to be more fundamental than either the quarrel between Plato and Aristotle or that between Kant and Hegel.

We, moreover, prefer to speak of Socrates and the prophets rather than of Plato and the prophets, and for the following reasons. We are no longer as sure as Cohen was that we can draw a clear line between Socrates and Plato. There is traditional support for drawing such a clear line, above all in Aristotle; but Aristotle's statements on this kind of subject no longer possess for us the authority that they formerly possessed, and

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this is due partly to Cohen himself. The clear distinction between Socrates and Plato is based not only on tradition, but on the results of modern historical criticism; yet these results are in the decisive respect hypothetical. The decisive fact for us is that Plato points, as it were, away from himself to Socrates. If we wish to understand Plato, we must take him seriously; we must take seriously in particular his deference to Socrates. Plato points not only to Socrates's speeches but to his whole life, and to his fate as well. Hence Plato's life and fate do not have the symbolic character of Socrates's life and fate. Socrates, as presented by Plato, had a mission; Plato did not claim to have a mission. It is in the first place this fact—the fact that Socrates had a mission—that induces us to consider, not Plato and the prophets, but Socrates and the prophets.

I cannot speak in my own words of the mission of the prophets. Let me, however, remind the reader of some prophetic utterances of singular force and grandeur. Isaiah 6:

> In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole world is full of his glory. . . . Then I said, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips. . . . Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Isaiah, it seems, volunteered for his mission. Could he not have remained silent? Could he refuse to volunteer? When the word of the Lord came unto Jonah, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me," "Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord"; Jonah ran away from his mission; but God did not allow him to run away; He compelled him to fulfill it. Of this compulsion we hear in different ways from Amos and Jeremiah. Amos 3:7-8: "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken; who will not prophesy?" The prophets, overpowered by the majesty of the Lord, bring the message of His wrath and His mercy. Jeremiah 1:4-10.

> Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee and before thou camest out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. . . . Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, Behold I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant.

To be sure, the claim to have been sent by God was raised also by men who were not truly prophets but prophets of falsehood, false prophets. Many or most hearers were therefore uncertain as to which kinds of claimants to prophecy were to be trusted or believed. According to the Bible, the false prophets simply lied in saying that they were sent by God. The false prophets tell the people what the people like to hear; hence they are much more popular than the true prophets. The false prophets are "prophets of the deceit of their own heart" (*ibid.* 26); they tell the people what they themselves imagined (consciously or unconsciously) because they wished it or their hearers wished it. But: "Is not my word like as a fire saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh rock in pieces?" (*ibid.* 29). Or, as Jeremiah put it when opposing the false prophet, Hananiah: "The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied both against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence" (28:8). This does not mean that a prophet is true only if he is a prophet of doom; the true prophets are also prophets of ultimate salvation. We understand the difference between the true and the false prophets if we listen to and meditate on these words of Jeremiah: "Thus saith the Lord; Cursed is the man, that trusteth in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. . . . Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." The false prophets trust in flesh, even if that flesh is the temple in Jerusalem, the promised land, the chosen people itself, or even God's promise to the chosen people (if that promise is taken to be an unconditional promise and not as a part of a covenant). The true prophets, regardless of whether they predict doom or salvation, predict the unexpected, the humanly unforeseeable—what would not occur to men, left to themselves, to fear or to hope. The true prophets speak and act by the spirit and in the spirit of *Ehyeh-asher-ehyeh*. For the false prophets, on the other hand, there cannot be the wholly unexpected, whether bad or good.

Of Socrates's mission we know only through Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, which presents itself as the speech delivered by Socrates when he de-

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fended himself against the charge that he did not believe in the existence of the gods worshipped by the city of Athens and that he corrupted the young. In that speech he denies possessing any more than human wisdom. This denial was understood by Judah Halevi among others as follows: "Socrates said to the people: 'I do not deny your divine wisdom, but I say that I do not understand it; I am wise only in human wisdom.' "* While this interpretation points in the right direction, it goes somewhat too far. Socrates, at least, immediately after having denied possessing anything more than human wisdom, refers to the speech that originated his mission, and of this speech he says that it is not his but he seems to ascribe to it divine origin. He does trace what he says to a speaker who is worthy of the Athenians' credence. But it is probable that he means by that speaker his companion, Chairephon, who is more worthy of credence than Socrates because he was attached to the democratic regime. This Chairephon, having once come to Delphi, asked Apollo's oracle whether there was anyone wiser than Socrates. The Pythia replied that no one was wiser. This reply originated Socrates's mission. We see at once that Socrates's mission originated in human initiative, in the initiative of one of Socrates's companions. Socrates, on the other hand, takes it for granted that the reply given by the Pythia was given by the god Apollo himself. Yet this does not induce him to take it for granted that the god's reply is true. He does take it for granted that it is not meet for the god to lie. Yet this does not make the god's reply convincing to him. In fact he tries to refute that reply by discovering men who are wiser than he. Engaging in this quest, he finds out that the god spoke the truth: Socrates is wiser than other men because he knows nothing, i.e., nothing about the most important things, whereas the others believe that they know the truth about the most important things. Thus his attempt to refute the oracle turns into a vindication of the oracle. Without intending it, he comes to the assistance of the god; he serves the god: he obeys the god's command. Although no god had ever spoken to him, he is satisfied that the god had commanded him to examine himself and the others, i.e., to philosophize, or to exhort everyone he meets to the practice of virtue: he has been given by the god to the city of Athens as a gadfly.

While Socrates does not claim to have heard the speech of a god, he claims that a voice—something divine and demonic—speaks to him from time to time, his *daimonion*. This *daimonion*, however, has no connection with Socrates's mission, for it never urges him forward but only keeps him back. While the Delphic oracle urged him forward toward philosophizing, toward examining his fellow men, and thus made him generally hated and thus brought him into mortal danger, his *daimonion* kept him back from political activity and thus saved him from mortal danger.

THE FACT that both Socrates and the prophets have a divine mission means, or at any rate implies, that both Socrates and the prophets are concerned with justice or righteousness, with the perfectly just society which, as such, would be free of all evils. To this extent Socrates's figuring out of the best social order and the prophets' vision of the messianic age are in agreement. Yet whereas the prophets predict the coming of the messianic age, Socrates merely holds that the perfect society is possible: whether it will ever be actual depends on an unlikely, although not impossible, coincidence, the coincidence of philosophy and political power. For, according to Socrates, the coming-into-being of the best political order is not due to divine intervention; human nature will remain as it always has been; the decisive difference between the best political order and all other societies is that in the former the philosophers will be kings or the natural potentiality of the philosophers will reach its utmost perfection. In the most perfect social order, as Socrates sees it, knowledge of the most important things will remain, as it always was, the preserve of the philosophers, i.e., of a very small part of the population. According to the prophets, however, in the messianic age "the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the earth" (Isaiah 11:9), and this will be brought about by God Himself. As a consequence, the messianic age will be the age of universal peace: all nations shall come to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, "and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:2-4). The best regime, however, as Socrates envisages it, will animate a single city which, as a matter of course, will become embroiled in wars with other cities. The cessation of evils that Socrates expects from the establishment of the best regime will not include the cessation of war.

Finally, the perfectly just man, the man who is as just as is humanly possible, is, according to Socrates, the philosopher; according to the prophets, he is the faithful servant of the Lord. The philosopher is the man who dedicates his life to the quest for knowledge of the good, of the idea of the good; what we would call moral virtue is only the condition or by-product of that quest. According to the prophets, however, there is no need for the quest for knowledge of the good: God "hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6.8).

* *Kuzari IV*, 13 and *V*, 14.

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RONALD STEEL

THE "YELLOW PERIL" REVISITED

"Once Japan is destroyed as an aggressive force, we know of no other challenging power that can appear in the Pacific. . . . Japan is the one enemy and the only enemy of the peaceful peoples whose shores overlook the Pacific Ocean."
—Ambassador Joseph Grew, 1942

"The long-range objective of the Chinese Communists is to become dominant in the Asian, African, and Latin American countries, and to frustrate the process of peaceful development and free choice in the developing nations."
—Robert S. McNamara, 1966

FOR TWO DECADES following the end of the Second World War, American foreign policy was dominated by the effort to contain the Soviet Union. The struggle with Russia consumed our energies and became the focal point around which much of American life revolved. The Marshall Plan, NATO, the Korean war, foreign aid, the Cuban crisis, the Alliance for Progress—all these were conceived and executed in terms of the contest with Russia for the leadership of the world.

By now the postwar period has passed, the struggle with Russia has sharply diminished, and the cold war is virtually over. Yet there is no peace. Having finally been able to establish ground-rules of peaceful coexistence with the Russians, we now find ourselves on a collision course with China. Where the protection of Europe and the ambitions of Russia once dominated our thoughts, now the security of Asia and the intentions of China have become an overriding American preoccupation.

China today stands where Russia did twenty years ago: resentful, ambitious, menacing. A revolutionary power dedicated to the demolition of the status quo and to the construction of a new order in which she will play a more predominant role, China unsurprisingly sees America as her main challenger in the Pacific. The United States has taken up that challenge. In an effort to contain Chinese power, American diplomacy is trying to apply many of the same methods in Asia that it applied, on the whole with such success, in Europe during the late 1940's. South Vietnam today is compared to Greece in 1947, and the battle to halt a Communist insurrection there is seen as one which will set a limit to Chinese aggressiveness.

In its present form, this effort to contain China —not only militarily, but economically, politically, and even ideologically—is a relatively new one. It did not begin in earnest until after we had achieved the current detente with the Soviet Union. Until that time we considered that our involvements in Asia were directed toward blocking Soviet power as it operated through the instrumentalities of "international Communism." But that monolith is no more, and we are now engaged in a contest with China over the future of Asia. It is a contest whose ultimate end no man can foresee, but which is likely to stand at the center of American foreign policy, and perhaps even American life, for at least a generation to come. Yet it is a contest that has not elicited the same approval among the American people as the earlier policy of containing Russia. Perhaps the people have not had the issues adequately explained to them. Or perhaps the stakes are not so important as those we were once gambling for in Europe.

Indeed, it is not even clear what the stakes are in Asia. Whether or not China can be contained in the same way the Soviet Union was contained in Europe, would the absorption by China of some of the smaller countries of Asia constitute a threat to American interests? In what sense would it matter to us if other Asian nations were to become Communist? Would this necessarily serve China's interests? Would it damage ours? These are all exceedingly difficult questions, but basic ones which must be answered if we are to emerge from the tragedy of Vietnam and avoid an even greater tragedy that looms on the horizon.

AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT in Asia on a major scale began with the Spanish-American war of 1898. We went to war with the declared purpose of liberating Cuba from Spain, but in the end we found ourselves saddled with the responsibility for Spain's possessions in the Pacific—the Philippine

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Islands. We didn't want the Philippines; few Americans even knew where they were. Yet when Spanish authority collapsed, the islands were unfit for independence and we were unwilling to turn them over to the European colonial powers. So we stayed on to administer them. But the possession which was acquired so casually when Admiral Dewey sailed into Manila harbor could not be held without a struggle. No sooner did we move into the Philippines than a guerrilla insurrection (a war of "national liberation," so to speak) broke out that required seventy thousand American troops to quell and that lasted from 1899 to 1902. It was our baptism by fire as an Asian power.

We acquired our first Pacific colony by accident, but this engaged us in the imperial task of providing for its defense. Thus we had to have a powerful navy. To refuel that navy, we had to have bases at strategic points in the Pacific such as Hawaii and Guam. And to protect that navy it was important that no other navy in the Pacific become predominantly strong. "Our acquisition of the Philippines," as Louis Halle, who has thrown so much light on this strange episode of our national history, has explained,

> constitutes the root of our dangerous and difficult embroilment in the Far East ever since. . . . In a real sense, the war with Japan from 1941 to 1945, the subsequent Korean war, and the stalemate along the straits of Formosa are consequences of our commitment to defend the Philippines.

Our direct involvement in Asian affairs naturally led us to a concern with the fate of China. Where we had formerly been content to let the Europeans carve up China at their pleasure—and then share in the profits—we now stepped in to declare our determination to keep China open to us as well. Such a declaration, however, would have been contrary to our professed principles and would have shocked many Americans. It was, therefore, cloaked in the phrases of a higher morality. Abjuring any acquisitive desires ourselves, we became the champion of China's territorial integrity. No closed enclaves in China, we told the Europeans. Let the door of trade be open to all comers—including latecomers. Free trade and *laisser-passer* were the new bywords as American diplomacy found, in the Open Door doctrine at the turn of the century, a unique combination of economic self-interest and political moralism.

TIME AND DISTANCE have embellished the Open Door policy with a mantle of disinterested generosity, and most Americans today view it as evidence of our benevolence toward China. But the history of our relations with China is not so simple, nor our record so unblemished by acts of self-service. For all the air of sanctimony that surrounded them, the Open Door notes of 1899-1900 represented another episode in the long pillage of China at the hands of the Western powers—a pillage whose fruits we enjoyed, but responsibility for which we sought to avoid. Seeing ourselves as China's friend and protector, above the tawdry avarice of the European powers, in practice we shared all the territorial privileges of foreigners in China without having to soil our hands in the process of getting them.

In addition to securing us a share of the lucrative China trade, the Open Door also provided an outlet for our national energies at a time when Manifest Destiny was riding high. It confirmed our rising sense of mission, which was expressed for the first time so dramatically in the Spanish-American war, and showed the Europeans that we were a power to be reckoned with in Asia. As the war with Spain moved us to the offshore islands of the Pacific, so the declaration of the Open Door planted us squarely on the mainland of Asia. By committing ourselves to the territorial integrity of China at a time when she was being dismembered by Japan, Russia, and the European powers, we also involved ourselves in the disorder of Asia.

We thought we could be a part-time Asian power, sticking our finger into the Chinese rice bowl, standing up to the European colonial powers, asserting the right of less fortunate peoples to democracy. We tried, in short, to indulge in a little moral posturing on the cheap. It finally caught up with us on December 7, 1941, that "date of infamy" that was also a day of reckoning. Half unconsciously, we had made ourselves Japan's chief rival in Asia. Now there was nothing to do but follow through the drama that had begun forty-three years before with Admiral Dewey's careless cruise into Manila harbor. The new defenders of Asia, we fought Japan through four years of warfare, in a crusade to extirpate evil from the Pacific—a crusade that culminated at Hiroshima. Under the policy of unconditional surrender that we considered the only proper conclusion to a crusade, we reduced Japan to rubble and stripped her of the territories she had acquired in Asia during the past half century. We had punished the aggressor and, so we thought, restored peace to the Pacific.

Yet by destroying Japanese power we automatically created a political vacuum in Asia. Having killed the tyrant, we discovered that there was no one left to keep order in the family. Asia was in a state of anarchy: Japan crushed, China in the grip of a civil war, the European colonies in a state of rebellion. Who could fill the vacuum? Not Japan, which had been demolished precisely because she was too adept at filling vacuums. Not China, where Mao Tse-tung's Communists and Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang were busy fighting each other. Not Russia, which was all too eager to move into Asia. Not the West European powers, their energies depleted by the war, and their colonies (with our encouragement)

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pressing hard for independence. Who else was left? Nobody but the United States.

THUS, having entered the war to defeat Japan, we found that victory had saddled us with the responsibility for her defense. We had to become the protector of our former enemy. In assuming this role, we developed a vital interest in Korea, which could be a threat to Japan if in unfriendly hands; in the Ryukyus islands, which controlled the approaches to Japan; and in the government that ruled China. Through our victory over Japan, we finally became a full-time Asia power.

Aside from the responsibilities we took on as the conqueror of Japan, there were the responsibilities we acquired as the patron of anti-colonialism. Even while the war was still being fought, we declared our sympathy for the Asian nationalists who were trying to push the Dutch out of the East Indies, the British out of the Indian subcontinent, and the French out of Indochina. One by one the nations of Asia became independent under the proud eye of the American midwife. But instead of ushering in the millennium, independence only compounded the anarchy of Asia. Poor in everything but ambition, the new nations were a breeding-ground for misery, sedition, and aggression.

In the Washington of 1945, independence for everyone seemed the password to a brave new world; by 1951 it had begun to seem a prescription for disaster. What had happened in the interval to change our minds? The cold war with Russia and the outbreak of the hot war in Korea. If the Czech coup and the Berlin blockade of 1948 broke the last straw of the uneasy truce with Russia in Europe, then the Korean war was the Asian counterpart. "The attack upon Korea," President Truman declared on June 27, 1950, "makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war."

The Korean war also confirmed the general opinion that the Communist government which had recently come to power in Peking was merely a branch office of the Kremlin. Although there was considerable evidence to the contrary even then, we *knew* that the Chinese revolution was a conspiracy organized by Moscow, and that its success constituted an automatic extension of Russian power. How could it be otherwise? Russia was Communist; China was Communist. Thus half of Asia lay in Moscow's grip. So, at any rate, our highest diplomatic authorities told us. China, as Dean Rusk said in 1951, is "a colonial Russian government—a Slavic Manchukuo on a large scale—it is not the government of China. It does not pass the first test. It is not Chinese."

Those who did not believe in the solidity of the "bloc," who saw the seeds of disintegration where others saw unshakable solidarity, and who had the temerity to observe that the Chinese revolution had been carried out independently of Moscow—and sometimes against its wishes—were rewarded for their pains by being hounded from the government as security risks. Nothing could shake our conviction that the Russians had masterminded the Chinese revolution and pulled the strings in Peking.

The facts, however, yielded a different story. Rather than directing the Chinese revolution, the Russians gave it little encouragement, and more than once attempted to squelch it. Unable to put an independent-minded Mao Tse-tung under his thumb and make the Chinese Communists subservient to Moscow, Stalin preferred to work with Chiang Kai-shek. At one point he even tried to get Mao to disband his army and throw in his lot with Chiang. Less concerned with the world revolution than with the security of Mother Russia, Stalin saw the Communists of other nations as instruments to be used for the advancement of Soviet interests. Since the Chinese had other ideas, he constantly doublecrossed them, continuing to back Chiang against Mao almost until shortly before the Generalissimo took his one-way trip to Formosa.

Caught up in our own private vision of the Maoist revolution, we could explain such a mystifying development only as the result of a sinister conspiracy. How else was it possible to account for the "loss" of *our* China, the China for whose sake we had declared the Open Door and fought the Japanese, the China we had educated in the American Way of Life through generations of missionaries? Instead of adapting to the new situation in Asia, we deluded ourselves into thinking that it could be reversed. China had been stolen from us by traitors, but Chiang Kai-shek, whose unhappy exile was described in such moving terms by his gracious wife on her American lecture tours, would soon return to Peking in triumph to the cheers of adoring multitudes.

If there was ever a possibility of reaching an accommodation with the new regime in Peking, it was smashed by the outbreak of the Korean war. Until then, the Truman administration had tried to keep the door ajar, and the President had declared as late as January 5, 1950 that "the U.S. government will not pursue a course which will lead to involvement in the civil conflict in China. Similarly, it will not provide aid or advice to the Chinese forces on Formosa." It makes wry reading now, nearly two decades and several billion dollars later, but at the time it was a noble try at non-interference. However, it all went by the boards when North Korea moved against the South in June of the same year. Convinced that this was the prelude to similar Russian-directed moves elsewhere, President Truman sent American troops to Korea and the Seventh Fleet to the Straits of Formosa. The Korean war was a turning-point for American foreign policy. It stimu-

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lated a sense of alarm in Europe that led directly to the rearmament of Germany and a vast expansion of American military power all over the world. And it also made Americans aware that China, too, was an enemy.

SINCE THAT TIME China has become a kind of nightmare for American policymakers. Because of the strange history of our relations with China, compounded as it is of feelings of guilt and rejection, we have been unable to look upon the Chinese Communist government with objectivity. The lingering effects of the China lobby—that curious band of ex-generals, embittered missionaries, and professional anti-Communists—and of the McCarthy era have stifled any impulse within the State Department toward new departures. There has been a timidity amounting to paralysis, a fear of facing real issues, and a habit of taking refuge in inherited rhetoric and obsolete stances. The questions of admission to the United Nations and the extension of diplomatic recognition, of trade and of expanded contacts, have not been examined and debated as real issues, but treated as questions of morality. And we seem to be just as misinformed and just as prone to dogma about China's intentions toward us as she is about ours. We are the victims of self-imposed ignorance, and the Chinese of insularity and rigidity. Where China has been cautious, we see her as aggressive; where she has been ambiguous, we see her as implacable. Caught up in our own fears, we have taken Chinese propaganda at face value, when a good deal of it is designed to inflate China's own importance and to embarrass the Russians in the contest for leadership of the Communist camp. Where we have learned to take Moscow with a grain of salt, we accept every Chinese boast with solemn seriousness.

We have been fighting China in one way or another ever since 1950, yet we still do not know what China is or what she wants. To most Americans, and indeed to most Westerners, China is, as Churchill once said about Russia, "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." We know all about China, and yet we know so little. We know how many bushels of rice and how many tons of steel she produces, how many soldiers and submarines she has, and how many grains of rice her peasants grow. We even know where her nuclear installations are concealed, and no doubt what Marshal Lin Piao has for dinner. But we do not seem to know what China wants from the world. Is it war, or is it to be left alone? Is it hegemony in Asia, or is it the defense of her frontiers? Is it the domination of the entire earth, or is it simply the prerogatives of a great power?

The answers are as varied as the questioners. Some believe that China is yearning to plunge the world into a nuclear holocaust in the conviction that although hundreds of millions would die, half a billion Chinese would survive to inherit the earth. This, however, is to take some of Mao's whistling in the dark at a good deal more than its face value. Others think that China has been the victim of a terrible misunderstanding, that she wants only to live at peace with her neighbors and to follow at home the ways of the Tao, as reinterpreted by Marx, Lenin, and Mao. This, however, is to deny the role that both ideology and nationalism play in Chinese policy. Still others try to follow a middle course between these two extremes, seeing China as a nation restored to national unity and independence after a century of humiliation, and determined to reassert her influence over those who live in her shadow. Whether this influence will be exerted by conquest, or by more subtle means of economic and political pressure, remains to be seen.

So much is conjecture because the Western world has been cut off from China since the Communists won the civil war nearly twenty years ago. Like the Cuban revolutionaries who followed in their footsteps a decade later, the Chinese seem to consider it a positive virtue to make an enemy of the United States. Since 1949, when they arrested our consul-general in Manchuria just as we were contemplating formal recognition of the Peking government, the Chinese Communists have preached anti-Americanism as a way of life. Yet in judging the reciprocal pathology of Sino-American relations, it is worth recalling that the world looks very different from Peking than it does from Washington. From our point of view, American interventions in Asia have been noble and divorced from national advantage. With no territorial ambitions ourselves, we have sought only to protect free peoples from Chinese-inspired Communist aggression. This is why we fought a war in Korea for three years, why we guard Chiang Kai-shek's army on Formosa, why we are furnishing military aid to most of non-Communist Asia, and why our own soldiers are fighting in Vietnam. We are there because, in the official view, only American military power prevents the Chinese from dominating the whole of Asia.

But to China's eyes, shaded by the spectacles of Marxist orthodoxy and a historical suspicion of the West, the United States is a threatening foe which nearly invaded Chinese territory in the Korean war, which uses its military power to prevent Formosa from being returned to China, which has rimmed China with military bases from Pakistan to Japan, which has kept her out of the United Nations, which continues to participate in the Chinese civil war by supporting Chiang Kai-shek, which is fighting a war against a Communist ally on China's southern frontier, and which seeks to deny China her rightful influence in Southeast Asia.

From their very first contacts with other peoples, the Chinese have considered foreigners to be uncultured and barbaric—and none more so than

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the whites of Europe who thrust their power upon a helpless China by the crude force of their technology. Considering that most of the Europeans of whom the Chinese had any experience were plunderers of the opium trade, adventurers who carved European enclaves in the nation's ports and sapped her wealth, and missionaries who were often patronizing in their attitude and who preached a religion with conceptions of sin and redemption that seemed vindictive in comparison to the easygoing tolerance of Taoism and Confucianism, it is not surprising that the Chinese were less than awestruck by what they saw of the West.

THE CHINESE have good reason not only to distrust but even to despise the West, for they suffered at the hands of Europe as few other countries have. The constructive side of Western colonialism felt in the Indian subcontinent and in Southeast Asia—the building of schools, roads, and hospitals, an instruction in the theories (if not the practice) of democracy—was barely ever in evidence in China. Nor did the Chinese benefit from the rational and liberating aspects of Western culture that revolutionized modern Japan. Rather than enjoying the mixed privileges of colonialism, they were looted and exploited like a conquered people.

The consequence was that instead of infusing the Chinese with a desire to absorb and emulate Western techniques, as Japan has so brilliantly done, the Western impact on China inspired a bitter xenophobia and an unquenchable resentment. This feeeling of resentment toward the West, toward Russia as much as toward America and Europe, is reflected in the calls for the revolt of the underdeveloped peoples against the developed ones, but it is no monopoly of the Communists. Thus even Chiang Kai-shek, before he was reduced to total dependency on the United States for his survival, never ceased denouncing the West for China's misfortunes. In his attitude toward the West, in his authoritarianism, and even in his economic beliefs (when in power he advocated collective farms and state ownership of industries), Chiang is a perfect companion to his successor, Mao. Were he still ruling in Peking, it is likely that his foreign policy would be very much like that being carried out by the Communists: anti-Western, racist, and expansionist.

Chinese as well as Marxist, the Communist inheritors of the Middle Kingdom have made themselves the champions of an anti-Western world insurrection. Being chauvinistic by nature, they see themselves as the true apostles of Marx, chosen to take over the revolutionary struggle from the "revisionist" Russians who have now been seduced by affluence and peaceful coexistence. Western "imperialism" led by the United States is equated with the "Khrushchev revisionists in Moscow who aid the American imperialists because they fear war and revolution." Both are lumped together as enemies of the downtrodden peoples, secretly conspiring to keep the lid on the Third World by quashing rebellions that might threaten their great-power duopoly.

As part of their effort to set themselves up as the true Rome of world Communism, the Chinese have, like most leaders of religious sects, reinterpreted the sacred doctrines of Marxism to suit their own purposes. Since they are a basically peasant society, it follows that only peasant societies are capable of achieving the true revolution. Since they have a tradition of suspicion and hostility toward the West, the West becomes the great enemy of that culminating point of history known as revolution. Since they feel their racial dignity has been offended by the white peoples of the West, then they shall appeal to other peoples throughout the world who have also been treated as racial inferiors by white civilization. Put this all together and you have a prescription for revolution that is anti-Western, anti-white, and even anti-proletarian—a prescription, in short, which accurately reflects China's own historical conditions, cultural sensitivities, and political convenience. Whether it is applicable to any other society, however, is a matter for dispute.

The most complete expression we have of the Chinese doctrine is in the famous 1965 pronouncement by defense minister Marshal Lin Piao.* Much has been made of this document, with its concept of an implacable opposition between the West as a whole and the impoverished peasantry of the Third World, and its call for the overwhelming of North America and Europe by means of a series of guerrilla-type revolutions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Rather than being a Chinese version of *Mein Kampf*, however, Lin Piao's article was, among other things, a cynical and self-flattering effort to represent Chinese weakness as a strength. China has no effective nuclear arsenal; therefore, nuclear weapons are discounted as unusable in a revolutionary struggle. China, for all her economic backwardness, is the most populous nation on earth; therefore those with the greatest numbers will ultimately conquer. Above all, China needs peace to consolidate her revolution and build an industrial economy. Therefore, Lin Piao states openly—in what is perhaps the most important and neglected part of his article—that "every revolution in a country stems from the demands of its own people" and that "their role cannot be replaced or taken over by any people from outside." The Chinese have given their ideological followers fair warning that they are on their own.

In short, while they have faithfully promised to applaud all revolutionary wars, the Chinese have prudently refrained from any promise to participate. They are the well-wishers of every-

* See "China's Strategy—A Critique" by Donald S. Zagoria in the November 1965 COMMENTARY, and "Chinese Visions & American Policies" by Benjamin Schwartz, April 1966—ED.

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body's revolution, but presumably the protectors only of their own. They encourage Communist parties elsewhere to use violence against the "imperialists," but in a war near their own frontiers they have stayed on the sidelines, fighting to the last Vietnamese. The Chinese have tried to keep Asia in ferment: encouraging animosity between India and Pakistan, between Indonesia and Malaysia, and so far as possible between America and Russia over Vietnam. But they have been remarkably cautious about involving themselves in the revolutions they preach.

Trumpeting their prowess in order to impress their friends and intimidate their adversaries, the Chinese have yet to overestimate their power on the battlefield or to engage in reckless military action. In Korea they entered the war only when MacArthur pushed to the Yalu and they felt their own territory to be in danger. In Tibet they regained control of a territory which had been under Chinese suzerainty from the days of the emperors. In India they consolidated their claim to Himalayan territories which have been in dispute since the frontier lines were drawn by the British, and which even the Nationalist government on Taiwan asserts are Chinese. After occupying the disputed territories and humiliating the Indians, they retired to the line of their original claim when they could have marched across the plains of Assam.

So far as political penetration is concerned, the Chinese, despite the anxieties of official Washington, have had little luck in subverting their neighbors by the force of their ideology. They have been kicked out of countries like Kenya, where they tried to buy off disgruntled politicians, discredited throughout much of the Third World for their blatant interference in the internal affairs of other nations, and subjected to a staggering defeat in Indonesia, where the Peking-oriented Communist party was virtually exterminated. The only place the Chinese have had any success in spreading their doctrine has been in South Vietnam, where a corrupt and oppressive regime pushed the opposition into the arms of the Communists. Yet even there it has not been a case of Chinese success so much as success for the Vietnamese Communists—who have always tried to stay independent of Peking, and who drove the French from Indochina mostly by their own efforts. The Chinese prescription for instant revolution via an anti-Western crusade is not being bought by the underdeveloped nations. Indeed, Lin Piao's doctrine seems to be taken at face value only in Peking and in Washington.

Washington's view of China as a land-grabbing monster about to gobble up all of Southeast Asia may cause nightmares along the Potomac, but it does not seem to be shared by most Asians. While they may fear China's intentions, they are not frightened by her propaganda for they know that China's military capacity is, for the time being, sharply limited and largely defensive in nature. China's nuclear arsenal is still in the testing stage, and it is far from certain whether it is primarily designed to intimidate her neighbors, or to deter Russian or American attack. China's army of two-and-a-half million men is the largest in Asia, but consists only of four armored divisions equipped with weapons less modern than those of such U.S.-supplied neighbors as Pakistan, India, and South Korea. China has only a primitive airlift ability for launching mobile operations, has virtually no capacity for making modern jet aircraft or modern heavy weapons, and has exceedingly limited oil reserves. Her navy is minuscule, made up mostly of submarines, torpedo boats, and armed junks, and her 2,500-plane air force is composed largely of obsolescent Soviet fighters. Her army is strong on the ground, but lacks strategic mobility. It is, in fact, smaller than that of either the United States or the Soviet Union. The dominant military power in Asia, then, is not China, but the United States, whose forces include the Seventh Fleet, with bases in the Philippines and Taiwan; ground and air units in Japan, Okinawa, South Korea, and Guam; and some half-million men in South Vietnam. In addition to this formidable tactical force, there is U.S. nuclear power which is not offset by any Chinese deterrent.

Chinese aggressiveness, therefore, is necessarily curtailed by the current incapacity of China to conduct major operations much beyond her present frontiers. There is, of course, always the danger of another Korea. But the essential point about Korea is not that the Chinese entered the war despite MacArthur's assurances to the contrary, but that they entered it only when the American army pushed deep into North Korea and approached the Chinese frontiers. China can be provoked into war, but in view of her current military weakness, she is in no position to take on an aggressive role.

This is for the present. But what about the future? What will happen when China develops her own nuclear arsenal? Will she not then be capable of carrying out a war for hegemony in Asia, beginning with the weak states along her southern frontier? This is a real possibility that American policy must be prepared for. While the acquisition of a nuclear delivery system will hardly make China the equal of the United States, it will dramatically affect the power equation in Asia. Yet even so, it is important to keep a sense of perspective about the uses to which a Chinese bomb could be put. It could not be employed aggressively without inviting massive American—or Soviet—retaliation: a retaliation that China would not dare to risk unless her very survival were at stake. The bomb, in other words, would greatly increase China's ability to deter an attack upon herself, but would be of little, if any, use in aggressive operations.

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While an effective Chinese nuclear arsenal will change the power equation in Asia, it need not necessarily lead to a period of greater danger or instability. In fact, by plugging the power vacuum that today exists in Asia, it could even induce greater stability. Without trying to stretch the point, one could argue that the United States would not be fighting a war in Vietnam today, that it would not have dared become so deeply involved with its own troops, if China already possessed her own nuclear arsenal. The bomb can intimidate the weak, but it can also deter the strong. It may be that once the Chinese missile force is operational, we shall have reached the condition of atomic stalemate in Asia that has long existed in Europe—and that helped pave the way for the Russo-American detente.

What is crucial is not that China has the bomb, but that China is once again becoming the major power of Asia, and may seek to test the full measure of her extraordinary potential. For two decades American policy has been mesmerized by the fact that China pays allegiance to Communism. But now we are being forced to come to terms with something more serious: the resurgence of a great nation which has been plundered, then subjected to isolation, and which now seeks to reassert its power and influence. What is at stake today in Asia is not the containment of Communism as an ideology, for ideas cannot be contained within national frontiers, but the containment of Chinese power. This is an effort in which America has a real role to play, but which, in the long run, must rest mainly upon those most directly concerned: upon the nations of Asia.

If China is to be contained—and it is important that she be contained—it can only be through the creation of *viable* nations in Asia which can stand on their own feet economically and which are able to resist internal threats to their authority. If they can do this, we need not overly concern ourselves with what ideology they profess or what forms of government they maintain. The containment of China cannot be accomplished by American soldiers fighting in the jungles of Vietnam for a puppet government, but by Asians who have a vested interest in their own independence and a willingness to defend it. This means containing China not through the weak little states along her periphery, but through the major nations of Asia: Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, and Pakistan.

As for the small states of Southeast Asia, they are going to have to live within China's sphere of influence, just as Chiang Kai-shek always said they must. This is unfortunate, but it is a fact of geography, and it is confirmed by several thousand years of Asian history. The peoples of Southeast Asia may not like having to live in China's shadow, but being within China's sphere of influence does not mean that they must, or will be, absorbed by China. Throughout her history China has shown a willingness to live at peace with her smaller neighbors so long as they were willing to respect the formalities of her dominant status. Even today, China has friendly relations with such non-Communist states on her frontiers as Burma, Nepal, and Pakistan. If this tradition is pursued, if there can be influence without domination, then we can all be reasonably satisfied. Every great power demands a certain obeisance from its smaller neighbors: the Russians do, we do, and the Chinese do as well.

It is possible, though not really likely, that one day a major state such as India or Indonesia may turn to Communism. But this might be more of a problem for Peking than for us. A powerful Communist rival in Asia would dispute China's claim to the ideological leadership of Communism in the Third World—just as China herself has challenged Russia. Indeed, the time may yet come when China will have reason to fear the expansion of her powerful neighbors even more than they today fear hers. It was only a generation ago that Japan was the most powerful nation in the Pacific, and China was an American-supported client. The next generation may be faced with the problem of containing an expansionist India or Indonesia. Stranger things have happened, and we need look back only twenty-odd years to be reminded of them.

Thus, while China may today seek to instigate revolutionary ferment in Asia to reduce Western or Russian influence, it is highly unlikely that she herself, even if successful, would be the beneficiary, any more than Russia was the beneficiary of the Chinese revolution. China's influence in Asia is, to be sure, greater than it was twenty, or even ten, years ago. The reason, however, is not that she espouses Communism, but that she is once again becoming a great power. American interventionism in Southeast Asia, moreover, has given her the opportunity to pose as an anti-imperialist power. That advantage would diminish if our interventions in Asia were to cease. Then the major nations of Asia could turn from their current problem of trying to moderate American interventionism to the growing problem of how to contain China.

By defining the containment of China in terms of the Communist issue, we have alienated the neutral governments of Asia which do not want to become involved in an ideological struggle. We have not been able to convince them that anti-Communism has anything to do with the containment of China. Anti-Communism is our own private crusade. The resistance to Chinese imperialism, on the other hand, is as vital an interest to Communist North Vietnam as it is to neutralist Cambodia and to capitalist Thailand. It is an issue on which we could have won universal support because it is not simply an American obsession, but an Asian reality. And unlike simple

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anti-Communism, it is a goal for which the Asians themselves would be willing to make sacrifices.

Whatever their feelings about Communism, the nations along China's frontiers have reason to suspect her ambitions. It is not the United States which would suffer from Chinese territorial expansion, for China can claim nothing that is ours. It is the Russians, whose Tsars seized vast territories in central Asia from the Chinese; it is North Korea and North Vietnam, whose struggle with anti-Communist regimes in the South make them more dependent on China than is either safe or prudent; it is India, plagued with monumental social and economic problems; and it is Indonesia, with the remnants of a Peking-oriented Communist party and a resentful Chinese minority which has suffered racial and economic discrimination. These are the nations which have a vested interest in restraining China. They should be our natural allies. Unlike China, we have no territorial designs upon them, they are not within our sphere of influence, and they have nothing we need. Yet we have lost the benefits of their nationalism by trying to square it with our anti-Communism.

Whether we like it or not, China is going to be one of the great powers of tomorrow's world. She will be a great power even if Mao Tse-tung and his comrades should turn in their party cards and sing hymns to Adam Smith. It may be generations before she reaches the full measure of her enormous potential, and by that time her leaders will probably think and behave very differently from the way they do now. Whether the difference will be for better or for worse may depend in large part on how we deal with China today—on whether we try to carry on a lonely crusade through our weak protectorates along China's frontiers, or whether we try to build a new balance in Asia based not upon the dying rhetoric of anti-Communism, but upon the realities of Chinese power and Asian nationalism.

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Sabbatai Zevi and the Jewish Imagination

ROBERT ALTER

The Patriarchs came to the world in order to restore the primal integrity of the senses, and accomplished this with four of them. Then Sabbatai Zevi came and restored the primal integrity of the fifth sense, the sense of touch, which —according to Maimonides and Aristotle—is mankind's disgrace, but which, through Sabbatai Zevi, became praiseworthy and glorious.

—18th-century Sabbatian homily

MODERN EXPERIENCE has taught us to recognize that in the particular past which we choose to rediscover, we discover ourselves—that is, we find out who we are and, in the older sense of the word "discover," we reveal, or expose, ourselves. This, at any rate, has repeatedly been the case since the 18th century, when people first began to look at the past in the full lucidity of historical perspective, out of a steady awareness of essential differences in the feel of human experience in different ages. Thus, the rediscovery of the middle ages by English writers in the last decades of the 18th century represented a final turning away from the age of reason, or rather solid common sense, that had begun with Hobbes, Locke, and the neoclassical writers after them: symptomatically, the term "Gothic," which was synonymous with "barbaric" for Pope and Swift, came to suggest rich and alluring realms of passionate adventure by the end of the century. In a similar way, the fascination that the primitive past has held for the modern age, since the time of Frazer, obviously reflects the underlying concerns and confusions of our own cultural predicament: out of a sense of sapped vitality, we turn to dark wellsprings of archaic life; out of a radical disenchantment with the weary and destructive course of Western history, we fill our inner vacuity with visions of ages when that history had scarcely begun, of places it never touched.

Now, in the varieties of Jewish experience undertaken since the French Revolution, it is the biblical past which has often served the purpose of focusing the self-awareness of the present. For the Reform movement in 19th-century Germany, the Bible was, of course, the source of those eternal verities that had been hidden or disguised by the encrustations of rabbinic law. There is, however, little attempt to reconstruct the life of the past imaginatively in this Reform use of the Bible as the artificial prop for a shaky ideology. In the early stages of modern Hebrew literature, on the other hand, the return to the Bible did involve a real immersion in the biblical past. The language of the new poetry and fiction, after all, was often the language of the Bible itself, in syntax, idiom, imagery; and many writers of the Hebrew Enlightenment struggled heroically to imagine anew, out of the bleakness and impotence of their lives in Exile, the sun-blessed warmth and vigor of life on the land when their forefathers tilled and defended it. There is an inner connection, therefore, between the literary return to the biblical past of the Hebrew Enlightenment and the physical return to the land of the Bible first envisioned by the proponents of *Hibat Zion* (Love of Zion) in the 1860's and fully realized by the Zionist movement. It is perfectly understandable that the Bible should still be given inordinate emphasis in Israel's schools and official cultural programs; implicit in the concentration on this particular stretch of the past is a rejection or at least depreciation of the long stretch of diaspora history which followed it.

The Bible alone, however, has generally proved to be a less than faithful mirror for the troubled face of the present, and Jews over the last few decades have attempted with increasing frequency to discover themselves through the recollected world of East European Jewry—most notably through the evocation of Hasidism, which, as an enthusiastic movement of inner liberation, has provided the most congenial material for humanistic reinterpretation or simply for sentimental distortion. What may at first seem surprising is that a messianic movement which, despite some affinities with Hasidism, is in important respects its diametric opposite, a movement which completely contradicts our cherished notions of European Jewish life as an innocent sphere of quaint or touching piety, should also have a powerful hold on the modern Jewish imagination.

In circles that have remained closely in touch with Jewish history—which, by and large, has meant among readers of Hebrew or Yiddish—the figure of Sabbatai Zevi, the 17th-century pseudo-messiah, has in recent times possessed a strange magnetism. It is suggestive that Abraham Mapu (1808-1867), who initiated the Hebrew novel with a book set in the time of Isaiah, soon after-

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ward began work on a novel called *The Visionaries* (of which only a fragment has survived) dealing with the Sabbatians. The subject has been treated by Sholem Asch (in Yiddish), by Israel Zangwill (in English), by Haim Hazaz (in Hebrew), and, of late, most impressively, by Isaac Bashevis Singer, again in Yiddish. In Jewish scholarship, moreover, during the past thirty years, Sabbatianism has become one of the great subjects of research. Most of this activity has been directly influenced by Gershom Scholem, who first announced the program for a general reassessment of Sabbatianism in an essay written in 1937, *Mitzvah ha-Baah Ba-'aveirah* (the untranslatable Hebrew title, which alludes to a Sabbatian reinterpretation of a talmudic concept, might be roughly paraphrased as "The Way of Holy Sinning"); Scholem's two-volume work in Hebrew on Sabbatai Zevi, published in 1957, stands as one of the major achievements of modern Jewish historiography.

The impression one gets from the usual handbooks of Jewish history or from the standard encyclopedias—all of them based on the hostile and misinformed scholarship of the 19th century—is that Sabbatianism was merely a bizarre and transient episode in Jewish history. A deluded Turkish Jew, his brain addled by mystic studies, pronounces the ineffable name of God to an assembled congregation in Smyrna. After he persists in committing this and other forbidden acts, the local rabbis banish him, and eventually he makes his way to Palestine, where he meets up with a very young man called Nathan of Gaza, who, unlike Sabbatai Zevi, has a genius for both theology and propaganda. Nathan manages to convince the older man that he, Sabbatai, is the Messiah, son of David, something he seems inclined to have believed at times anyway, and the two begin to look fervently for the imminent unfolding of the redemption, perhaps in the next year, 1666. Sabbatai returns to Smyrna to announce his mission while Nathan, his "prophet," busies himself sending out emissaries to the far reaches of the diaspora, bearing the good tidings. Almost everywhere, masses of Jews respond to the call of redemption. Sabbatai Zevi proceeds to Constantinople, where his followers expect him to take the crown from the head of the sultan. Instead, he is imprisoned for inciting resurrection; after being detained in what proves to be grand state in the fortress at Gallipoli—the divinely appointed bastion, his followers believe, from which he will soon emerge for the last great battle with the forces of evil—he is summoned to judgment and offered the choice between death by slow torture and conversion to Islam; unhesitatingly, he assumes the fez.

Sabbatai Zevi's apostasy strikes Jews everywhere with the profoundest consternation and despair; in its aftermath, only small sectarian groups of the "faithful" cling to the belief in his messiahship, explaining that he has entered into the realm of defilement in order to redeem or conquer evil at its very source. Some of the faithful imitate their master by themselves converting; others engage in orgiastic rites in order to emulate the audacious plunge of the redeemer into the sphere of impurity. A century later, when the social, political, and intellectual horizons of the Jewish people begin to enlarge significantly with the advent of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, Sabbatianism seems like a bad dream, a last sickly residue of what were still the Jewish middle ages.

IN CONTRAST TO this general image of Sabbatianism, which owes much to the rationalistic bias of 19th-century Jewish historiography, Scholem has tried to understand the subject sympathetically, as a manifestation of religious consciousness, not merely of psychopathology. Above all else, he has sought to demonstrate that Sabbatianism, far from being a strange passing episode, is in effect the beginning of modern Jewish history. He is able to establish through a careful and exhaustive examination of contemporary documents that the proportions of Sabbatianism, both in the lifetime of Sabbatai Zevi and afterward, were far greater than the official "Jewish" versions of the events have led us to believe. During those hectic months of messianic jubilation before the apostasy, opposition to Sabbatai Zevi in all but a few places was negligible or simply did not exist. Revered rabbis, adepts of the Law, pillars of the various communities, believed without question in Sabbatai's messiahship; the minority who had doubts kept prudently silent for the most part in the face of the fervid enthusiasm of the Jewish populace. Until the apostasy, then, there was no Sabbatian "sect"; one must rather say that Sabbatai Zevi, with only minor exceptions, was the acclaimed Messiah of the Jewish people, from Yemen to Galicia, from Tunis to Amsterdam. Scholem also shows that very considerable numbers of Jews still adhered to the belief in Sabbatai, and the imminent redemption he would bring, for nearly a century after his death. The most essential point, however, of Scholem's revisionist history is that for a brief moment almost the whole Jewish people was convinced it was living in the presence of the dawning redemption—the *ithalta d'geulah*—and that many would never again be able to accept their unredeemed, restricted lives as ghetto Jews in the same unquestioning way. A passage in which Scholem discusses the new relation to rabbinic law into which the Sabbatian experience thrust Jews touches on a crux of his argument and also reveals a chief source for his own fascination with the whole Sabbatian phenomenon:

> The believers were able to develop a new criterion with which to measure ghetto reality. This ghetto Judaism had been and was still up-

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held by the "infidels" who denied the Redeemer's mission, men who possessed the mere body of the Torah and not its innerness. It would not be long before some of the believers would come, whether in extreme or moderate forms, to a criticism of rabbinic Judaism. And that criticism, it must be emphasized, would be from within, not primarily dependent upon the influence of external causes and historical circumstances, like the criticism evoked in the period of the French Revolution and in the age of struggle for political rights for the Jews. . . . And if the traditional forms no longer fit the paradoxical values upon which the movement stood, they would have to seek new and other expressions for their utopian Jewish consciousness. For their consciousness was Jewish and remained Jewish; even at moments of open conflict with the ruling powers of the traditional Jewish society, the believers did not seek to deny their historical Jewish identity from the start.*

The general effect of Scholem's pioneering research into Sabbatianism is to turn inside out many of our preconceptions of what is Jewish and what is not. If we think of Jews as tough-minded rationalists, wryly ironic realists, Scholem shows us a whole people emotionally caught up in the most fantastic faith, men and women alike wildly dancing, rolling on the ground, foaming at the mouth, uttering prophecies. If we think of Jews as people living within tightly drawn lines of legal restriction and self-imposed restraint, Scholem shows us Jews casting off all bonds, entering, so they thought, into a new world of unlimited freedom where, according to the Sabbatian maxim, "the abrogation of the Torah is its true fulfillment." If we think of Judaism as a broad antithesis to Christianity in some of its most essential assumptions, Scholem shows us Jews insisting on the primacy of faith over works, Jews coming to believe in a trinitarian God of which the Son, or Messiah, is part, Jews arguing —with the traditional method and idiom of rabbinic discourse as well as of the Kabbalah—that the Messiah has taken upon himself seeming disgrace and outward defeat in order to redeem a sinful world. If our stereotype of the pre-modern Jew tends to be a puritanical figure, stern, pale, enveloped in somber cloth, following a faith in which the dominant symbols and institutional arrangements are masculine, Scholem discovers for us a Messiah who awakens the hearts of Jews to the possibilities of serving God through the pleasures of the body, who sings this poignantly sensual Spanish song to the *Shekhina* at the holy ark, Torah in hand:

When I went up to the mountaintop
When I came down to the river's edge
I met Meliselda
Who is the Emperor's daughter
Coming up from the bath
From the bath where she had washed.
Her face flashed like a sword
Her brows were like the bow
Her lips were like corals
And her flesh whiter than milk.

This is not to suggest that Scholem, the disciplined scholar and patient reasoner, so clearly an "Apollonian" figure, is preaching through his scholarship the adaptation of a "Dionysian" form of Jewish life. But what he construes to be the vitality manifested in Sabbatianism is what especially draws him to it, and it is this which he himself emphasizes in the preface to his *Shabbtai Tzvi*: "The degree of vitality in these phenomena surprises us no less than the degree of daring in them, and the eyes of recent generations have learned to see the spark of Jewish life and the constructive longings even in phenomena which Jewish tradition fought against with all its soul." Now, vitality is a concept which, when it is not completely self-evident, becomes oddly elusive, and I must say that I find this to be the case with Scholem. One man's vitality is another man's sickness, as opposing interpretations of Sabbatianism vividly illustrate. Scholem seems to connect vitality almost axiomatically with antinomianism, though it could easily be argued that antinomianism in general, especially as it moves toward the unbridled excesses to which its inner logic drives it, is rather an expression of cultural, moral, and psychological disintegration, sharing with vitality only the superficial similarity of violent motion. More plausibly, Scholem appears to associate vitality with the return to the full life of the senses that is at least implicit in the urgent messianic expectations of the Sabbatian movement. If the early talmudic masters had taught their disciples to imagine this world as an "anteroom" to the "main hall" of a true world elsewhere, the Sabbatians thought they were seeing the anteroom transformed before their eyes into the inner hall of the palace, and so there is, paradoxically, a powerful impulse toward realizing the fullness of life here and now in the very movement so intoxicated with the heady mysteries of the divine Beyond. Finally, Sabbatianism is an expression of national vitality for Scholem because it begins to look like a movement of auto-emancipation miscarried only because the age in which it occurred made its political implementation unfeasible: Sabbatai Zevi, the manic-depressive kabbalist, is no Theodor Herzl, but it is undeniable that at his call thousands upon thousands of Jews in all parts of the diaspora actually began to pack up their possessions and prepared to march after him to Zion.

"Vitality" has been a great will-o'-the-wisp of Hebrew literature at least since the time of Berditchevski, Schneour, Tchernichowski—the first generation of Hebrew writers to be influenced by Nietzsche—and I think that it is against this background that Scholem's emphasis on the vitality of Sabbatianism has to be seen. The Sabbatian move-

* The translation of this and subsequent Hebrew texts is mine.

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ment plays much the same role in Scholem's imaginative vision—and he is a historian who clearly possesses such a vision—as the cults of Baal, Astarte, and Tammuz play in the poetry of Tchernichowski and the latter-day Canaanites after him. Both the pagan gods and the more recent messianic movement embody possibilities of a dramatic "transvaluation of values" for the Jewish people, and Scholem in fact uses the Hebrew equivalent of that Nietzschean formula, *shinui 'arakhim*, more than once in describing the Sabbatian program. The Canaanite gods, however, are a convenient literary fiction, a cultural alternative borrowed from the outside that at best merely impinged once upon ancient Israel. Scholem's model of vitality, on the other hand, is the product of a process immanent in Jewish historical experience. The Sabbatians see themselves as the legitimate heirs of the Jewish past; even as they set about radically transforming the practices and values of Jewish tradition, "their consciousness was Jewish and remained Jewish." Scholem argues, moreover, that there is some causal connection between them and the 19th-century modernizing movements that sought to change the basic conditions of Jewish existence.

SCHOLEM'S encompassing interpretation of Sabbatianism is so subtly developed that it is hard to know how much of it is really cogent, how much merely seductive. The subject, at any rate, has a seductive allure for him, and I think his relationship to it is finally Faustian, as Faust in Part Two of Goethe's poem plunges into the depths of the past to capture a beauty and power that will always elude him. This, if I read him right, is what S. Y. Agnon is suggesting about enterprises like Scholem's in his remarkable tale, *Edo and Enam*. According to literary gossip in Jerusalem, Dr. Ginath, the enigmatic discoverer of unknown ancient cultures in the story, is in fact an oblique allusion to Agnon's old friend, Gershom Scholem. (The character's name might be a clue: there is a medieval kabbalistic work entitled *Ginath Egoz*, which, like all other kabbalistic works, has been discussed in print by Scholem. The word refers to the "garden" of mystic contemplation.) Twice in the story, a character wonders, jokingly, whether Dr. Ginath might not be sitting in his room writing a third part to *Faust*. Ginath's key to the mysteries of the primal past is, in a strangely denatured way, erotic: in the somnambulistic Gemulah he holds the Helen of a civilization older than Troy whom he will never really possess, as Faust never really possesses Helen. There is something both poignant and ghoulish in her love for him, his use of her; and the intrinsic logic of their relationship brings them to mutual destruction. If, at the end of the tale, Ginath leaves after him the luminous life and beauty of the past he has captured in his work for every man to "make use of its light," that final phrase echoes another a few pages earlier about the ambiguous light of the moon, magically linked to the doomed Gemulah, of which the narrator must warn: "Happy is the man who can make use of its light and come to no harm."

Agnon, in his symbolic treatment of the characteristically modern quest for sources of renewal in the past, is concerned with the ultimate spiritual dangers of such pursuits, but Scholem's own scholarly enterprise also has more immediate implications, and as a useful gloss upon them I would like to offer another imaginative work in Hebrew, Haim Hazaz's play, *In the End of Days*. The Hazaz play, written in 1950, is in no way a direct comment on Scholem, but it provides an instructive parallel, making explicit the ideological message of Sabbatianism that seems to be implicit for Scholem. The action is set in a German town during the time of Sabbatai Zevi's ascendancy. Yuzpa, the fiery messianist who is eventually excommunicated for his rebellion against the traditional order, can be taken, with little qualification, as Hazaz's spokesman in the play, and the doctrine he preaches is the annihilation of the Exile, which for him means a tearing apart of the institutional bonds that held life in the diaspora together: "The strength of the Exile is in Torah, commandments, and the fear of heaven. . . . Torah has been absorbed by Exile, has become synonymous with it." It begins to be clear why Sabbatian antinomianism should be associated with vitality, for all the heavy restrictions, sodden with the weight of Exile, must be cast off in order to enter the new world of freedom and life: "We will bury ourselves, a burial of the dead in license, in promiscuity and raw instinct, in order to arise from the void and chaos of this world like the sleepers of the dust who are destined to be resurrected, pure and clean and seven times more alive."

Hazaz, let me emphasize, is not really interested in moral anarchy but rather uses such anarchy as a dramatic symbol for what he conceives as the desperate need to smash the Exile, to extirpate all bonds and allegiances with the world of Exile. The main referent of messianism in his play is not individual and anarchic but collective and political. When Yuzpa interprets Sabbatianism as a call for Jews to seize the reins of their own destiny, we hear in his words a distinctly Zionist modernization of the 17th-century movement; Scholem, as a meticulous scholar, is careful to represent his subject in its own pre-modern religious terms, but he often leads us to infer the same analogy with the modern secular movement of redemption that is forced upon us by Hazaz's protagonist: "Heaven is in our hands . . . understand that, my friend, understand that. The Redemption depends on us; more than on God Almighty and more than on the Son of David, it depends on us. Not the Messiah alone, but us as well, the whole people of Israel and every single

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Jew! Great is the Redemption we possess, for we ourselves have conceived it. . . . We decreed and He—must carry it out."

Although I do not think that Scholem's superb scholarship can justly be called tendentious, there is surely some connection between his ideological commitment to secular Zionism and his professional commitment to the study of Sabbatianism. If we are generally accustomed to place the rise of Zionism in the context of 19th-century European nationalism, Scholem's reassessment of Sabbatianism emphasizes a powerful desire for immediate national redemption working through the entire people, an exhaustion of patience with life in exile, which are not dependent upon external influences or the imitation of European models. Scholem finally sees Sabbatianism as a preparation of the ground for modern Jewish nationalism, and he even tries to establish a lineal descent—somewhat sketchily, it must be said—from known Sabbatian families to the first Jewish proponents of Enlightenment, who in turn prepared the way for the beginnings of Zionism. Scholem has been vehemently attacked on this point by Baruch Kurzweil, the Israeli literary and cultural critic, who claims that it represents a spurious attempt to legitimize secular Zionism in Jewish terms, to set it up as the logical and authentic product of a process working within Jewish history before its exposure to the great innovating forces of the modern world. Kurzweil vigorously denies any causal connection between Sabbatianism and the Hebrew Enlightenment, though he bases his argument less on historical documentation than on common sense—perhaps a dangerous criterion in history—and on his deep personal conviction that Sabbatianism is a pathological "borderline phenomenon" from which little can be learned about Judaism in its strength, or about the Jewish people as a whole.

I cannot pretend to the competence needed to resolve the complex question of Sabbatianism's role in the concatenation of modern Jewish history, but it does not seem to me that the proof of historical causation is indispensable to Scholem's implicit argument for the contemporary relevance of his subject. The ultimate importance of Sabbatianism for our age, even in Scholem's case, is as a paradigm and not as an ancestor. In a period when many conscious Jews are trying to sort out the confusions of their own Jewish identity by a renewed confrontation with the variety of the Jewish past, the Sabbatians embody possibilities of Jewish existence, lived in the fullness of "utopian Jewish consciousness," which are—despite Kurzweil—imaginatively stirring, in any case challenging, and in certain obvious ways deeply disturbing as well. We adopt figures from the past as our contemporaries out of our own needs, regardless of the lines of historical connection with them, and Sabbatai Zevi, the grandly and pathetically deluded Messiah, reaching out for a lustrous world of redemption over the precarious brink of an abyss of anarchy, is, for better or for worse, a distinct contemporary.

THE PARADOX of Sabbatai Zevi's contemporaneity is allied, I think, to that of Isaac Bashevis Singer, a writer whose world is older than the crumbling folio pages of a study-house Talmud and yet has seemed to many readers as urgently modern as the last inarticulate cry from the Theater of the Absurd. Singer has none of Scholem's interest in the ideological inferences that may be drawn from Sabbatianism, but its antinomian frenzy constitutes for him a dark revelation of human nature and of the character of the spiritual reality we inhabit. It should give us pause to note that one of the greatest Jewish scholars of our age and also one of our great Jewish imaginative writers have been powerfully drawn to this same ambiguous subject. (This, incidentally, is one of several respects in which Singer and Agnon offer an instructive contrast. Agnon, for all his imaginative intimacy with spectral ambiguities, remains rooted in what used to be called "normative" Judaism. Although Buczacz, Agnon's native town, is one of a dozen places singled out by Scholem as centers of underground Sabbatian activity for generations after the death of the false messiah, there is no trace of the presence of Sabbatianism in all Agnon's fiction about the Buczacz of bygone days, with the exception of the father of the groom in *The Bridal Canopy*, whose grandfather used to eat a single pea on the fast of Tisha B'Av, hedging his bets, so to speak, on the late redeemer.)

One gets the peculiar impression that Sabbatianism plays a larger role in Singer's fiction than is actually the case. It is the subject of just one novel, *Satan in Goray*, and appears in the background of one other, *The Slave*, while most of the short stories are set in a period well after the conclusion of the Sabbatian movement. This impression, however, is not altogether mistaken because the Sabbatian experience serves as an implicit model or general analogue for what we have come to recognize as the distinctive Singer world, whatever its temporal setting—a world in which humanity, having burst the constricting bands of civilized restraint, hurls itself into a witch's sabbath of lust and self-debasement.

It is worth noting that Singer in *Satan in Goray* chooses to refashion Sabbatianism in the image of its final deterioration in the 18th-century orgiastic sect of the sinister Polish Jew, Jacob Frank. A few of the details of the novel, in fact, seem direct borrowings from the career of Frank, like the old castle in which the members of the sect gather at night to wallow together in sexual abominations as a means of hastening the redemption. This is not a serious distortion of historical fact on Singer's part because Sabbatai Zevi's own selective but spectacular violations of the Law—perhaps more appositely here, of taboo—clearly pointed the way to a nihilistic rebellion against all moral

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inhibition. What Scholem observes in contrasting the Sabbatian paradox of the Messiah's apostasy with the Christian paradox of the Messiah's crucifixion might be an appropriate motto for the moral world of much of Singer's fiction: "The paradox . . . of apostasy . . . leads straight into the bottomless pit; its very idea makes almost anything conceivable." While many modern novelists have written under the shadow of Ivan Karamazov's warning that if God does not exist everything is permissible, the somber implication of Sabbatianism spelled out here is more strictly appropriate to Singer's world, which remains unquestionably sacramental, suffused with the presence of divinity, but a divinity that may be ultimately ambiguous, that repeatedly threatens to become a satanic inversion of itself. Singer, in other words, is lucidly aware that the moral abyss opened up by Sabbatianism is also a metaphysical abyss; as Scholem aptly sums up the movement in his chapter on it in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, "To the Sabbatians all reality became dialectically unreal and contradictory. . . . Their God no less than their Messiah bears the mark of such self-contradiction and disintegration." It is surely Singer's artistic realization of this threat of self-contradiction in the ultimate nature of reality that, more than anything else, explains his anomalous "modernity."

MODERN LITERATURE has in certain memorable instances chosen to search out strange continents and alien races for the dramatic symbols of the Heart of Darkness in all men. Singer's Sabbatians, by contrast, confront us with a kind of unsettling intimacy because they are, historically, part of us —as thoroughly Jewish as any caftaned, earlocked, pious figure in Peretz or Sholem Aleichem. They represent, to borrow a pointed idiom of the Kabbalah, the *Sitra Ahra*, The Other Side, of ourselves. Singer's attitude, moreover, toward his sundry devotees of the demonic is not finally moralistic, and this is probably what most disturbs those of his Jewish readers who have vociferously objected to his "negativism." We might note in this connection that the attitudes of the pious "Tale of the Dybbuk," the epilogue to *Satan in Goray*, are not identical with those of the novel as a whole. If the moralizing narrator of the Tale denounces Reb Gedaliyah, the leader of the heretics, as a "son of Belial and entirely wicked," the figure of the arch-Sabbatian in the novel itself is somewhat more ambiguous. Reb Gedaliyah is, of course, a bestial man (his body is matted with hair, covered with rolls of fat) who eventually leads his followers into extreme acts of bestiality; but he is also a ministering spirit to the sick, a teacher of speech to the stammering, laughter to the melancholy, simple joy to the young. There is an essential element of *playfulness* in Reb Gedaliyah that provides a paradoxical continuity between his exuberant geniality, his almost Falstaffian love of mischief, and the moral obscenities he perpetrates. What he promises his followers, after all, is a world of pure spontaneous play, where there is no right or wrong, pure or impure, permitted or proscribed. Singer is horrified by the utopia of depravity Reb Gedaliyah envisages, and yet he is also at moments responsive to the Sabbatian's dream of an unchecked flow of self-fulfilling life. *Satan in Goray* is finally an unresolved novel because the forces of anarchic release it dramatizes cannot be contained by the moral imagination that shapes plots, do not admit of readily conceivable human resolutions.

ACCORDING to a kabbalistic tradition adopted by the followers of Sabbatai Zevi, there are two Torahs: the Torah of the Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil, which has been revealed to us, and the Torah of the Tree of Life—manifestly, beyond good and evil—which the Redeemer is to reveal. Because the common image of the Jew has been a figure clinging to the first Torah, the man bound by the Law, there is a special piquancy in Sabbatianism's antithetical image of the Jew committed to a Torah which is all life, unfettered by any law. The serious danger, however, in such alluring antitheses is that life becomes arbitrarily associated with the abandonment of restraints and hence death with the general notion of imposing limits. The experience of the more extreme Sabbatians, culminating in the Frankists, and again, the fate of vitalistic ideologies in modern political history, suggest that the quest for life, so conceived, may produce only its opposite, and that it is the human vocation to try to realize life to the fullest within necessary limits. Perhaps from this ultimate viewpoint there is a greater truth in Singer's fictional version of Sabbatianism than in Scholem's massive reconstruction of it, for Singer knows in the very quick of his imagination what Scholem understands finely but often seems unwilling to concede—that the would-be redeemer opened the gates to a world of chaos, not of redemption.

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ENGLISH IMPORTS ON BROADWAY

Jack Richardson

I HAVE BEEN made weary and humble by my last visit to the theater. My mind, which I had always considered fairly well-tuned to the vagaries of dramatic literature, has finally been blanked after encountering a work of too profound a consequence for it to handle. For some three weeks, over long meditative stretches, I have let loose all the hounds of criticism at my disposal, have set them to sniffing about this particular play and have watched them yelp with failure after uncovering not even the wisp of some essential scent that might allow me a few paragraphs of cogent praise. This aesthetic rebuke would be hard enough were the play in question a *sub rosa* production of some brief, semi-deranged effulgence, heading, cometlike, for oblivion. However, this is not the case. The play, if you please, resides on Broadway and is currently festooned with every favor that popular judgment provides, including a decent-sized run. Weightier salutes have come from the likes of Harold Clurman, who has made grasping this play and understanding the times in which I live coextensive propositions, and from Richard Gilman, an admired friend, who has counseled that, with this work, I have witnessed a sort of Symbolist evolution into drama—i.e., a play that is about its own language. The only sophisticated ally I have in my bafflement is John Simon, the "acid test" of the *Hudson Review*. He, too, sees a naked emperor on parade, but since Simon very seldom sees anything else, I'm sure he'll understand when I say that I find it cold comfort to be alone with him.

The cause of my difficulties is *The Homecoming*. For some eight years now its author, Harold Pinter, has grown in theatrical estimation until he has become a playwright whom many believe to be of major significance in the history of English drama. Even those who are skeptical about the worth of Osborne, Wesker, Arden, and other members of England's social-dramatic reformation accord Pinter the status of a formidable writer. They see in the capricious behavior and contradictory thought processes of his characters comic intimations of evils and dilemmas that fester in the very roots of man's existence. If pushed for specifics, Pinter and his votaries have a safe sanctuary in the Theater of the Absurd's critical paraphernalia which equate style with subject and do not allow interpretations of works within their sway; rather, like an earthquake or a hiccup, the events on stage are their own justification—random phenomena from which an observer, like Pascal with the dark infinities of the night sky, is allowed to draw his own emotional conclusions—conclusions which may or may not have been intended by the creator. Thus, in a way, it would seem that to criticize Pinter is to criticize existence itself—an allowable but barren enterprise.

STILL, HOWEVER, those objects I saw on the stage were not, after all, subatomic particles but human beings. They may be stylistic devices, but as long as these devices maintain their animal specifics, then one has a right to look for some purpose in their behavior. Pinter does not, like Beckett, deal in abstracts. His characters are not lost in universal wastelands or Unspecific Time. They are from definite places and they go on about everyday problems and things in a language that is really no more than well-edited common speech. In short, whether they like it or not, they owe a prior allegiance to the geography of human behavior before they can become self-sufficient data. Something must convince us that their inconsistent antics are more than lunatic meanderings or the results of a self-indulgent dramatic style.

The Homecoming, for example, presents us with a family that consists of a father, three sons, one uncle, and a daughter-in-law. The father is a brackish, snarling old fellow; one son is a vicious ponce, the second is a troglodyte with adenoidal speech who wishes to be a professional boxer, and the third is an extremely unverbal professor of philosophy; the uncle is a somewhat rattled old gentleman who suffers abuse from all quarters and is proud that he is considered a good chauffeur. As for the daughter-in-law, the professor's wife, we shall come to her later.

For the better part of the first act, the play proceeds along the road of intra-familial insults, especially between Max, the father, and Lenny, his pimp offspring. Non-sequiturs of hate, bitterness, and invective float about the stage in pungent local dialects, and no mood or attitude is sustained, it seems, for longer than a minute. From a happy recollection comes a harsh obscenity; from an innocuous pleasantry, a hurting, vicious response; from a coarse, satyresque character, moral outrage over a mild sexual reference. Why all the anger, spleen, and psychological acrobatics among these lower-class Londoners? Ask not; they are what they are.

Into this oxymoronic world come the philosopher-son and his wife. It is his homecoming, an occasion to introduce the woman he has married to his father, uncle, and brothers. The couple fits immediately into the surroundings. While the philosopher sports a hostile, enigmatic smile, the lady allows herself to be mauled and petted by her in-laws. Her undoing is first brought on by the pimp of the family who then turns over the rough ends of seduction to his pugilist brother. All this while the rest of the household, academic husband included, look on. From the crossed-monologues which serve for conversation between this husband and wife, it is apparent that they are not in perfect marital

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harmony, but for the lady to go off upstairs in the gorilla-like arms of brother Joey right in the midst of tea, does seem like behavior that needs some accounting for.

Still, the philosopher keeps his smile intact, retaliates only by stealing his brother's cheese sandwich, and, finally, when his wife decides to stay in the family house and work as one of Lenny's whores, he leaves without fuss for his American university and the two children who are now motherless. The final curtain comes down on the woman tenderly fondling her new lover, while Max whines on about how he's not too old to get his share from the family whore, the uncle lies stricken on the floor after a one-line revelation on how his brother's wife had been upended in the back of his car by a mutual friend, and Lenny stands, with sardonic countenance, observing all.

NOW DEPENDING on one's mythopoeic faculty, a great deal might be made out of these events, but to do so entails much more effort than the author himself has gone to. If we are to take *The Homecoming* as something of a parable, then I would recall how the most successful of modern parabolists, Kafka, while also basing his style on the method of self-contradiction—the assertation that at the same time and place *A* is and is not *A*—never left hold of the common notion of reality nor allowed existential anomalies to degenerate into mere caprices, unbuttressed by the very firm and specific narrative of his work. On the contrary, however nightmarish the situation, it always had enough *artistic* probability on its side to make it seem unexceptional and, therefore, truly terrifying. Pinter's disjoining of reality, on the other hand, is more of the funhouse variety than of *The Castle*.

And if *The Homecoming* is not a parable? If it is no more and no less than the sum of itself? Well, then we are free to like or not like each moment of the play in isolation—in the same way as we have license to tune in and out on a haphazard cocktail-party conversation. Further, if there is no personality or point of view authorizing the utterances onstage, then indeed we are left simply with language, with syntactical flourish, and though there may some day be a theater that contents itself with the dramatic clash of subordinate clause and participial phrase, the logician will be more at home in it than the poet.

The company that performs *The Homecoming* proves how effective sheer technique can be. English actors have always played well off language, trusting to the author for cohesiveness and justification of the attitudes the words lead them into. Even when these author's supports are not there, this very sensual verbal play can make it seem as though they are, and so one goes away from *The Homecoming* certain that Paul Rogers, Ian Holm, John Norminton, Terrance Rigby, Michael Craig, and Vivien Merchant have given very fine performances of something or other, and one wants very much to believe that all those coruscations of mood and person served some noble purpose.

But after all the tricks have been played, after the melodramatic codas to each act have been concluded, after the snippets of action have been juggled about, after all the sanguine acquiescence in the grotesque—after all of this, one is still left with the feeling that, in Harold Pinter, we have a writer who puts together loose fragments of highly actable scenes and then hopes that some part of life will conform to them. Art is just not that simple, and neither, Mr. Clurman, are the times we live in.

ANOTHER ENGLISH export that has succeeded this season is Peter Shaffer's *Black Comedy*. Unlike *The Homecoming*, Shaffer's work is an entirely commonplace piece of theater—not particularly good, not particularly bad—and it is of interest mainly through serving notice, especially in the companion piece, *White Lies*, that the genteel days of English drama are not quite over. In this curtain-raiser, a fortune-teller and a young rock-and-roll singer discuss love and loneliness, image and reality, with the sort of restrained frankness that used to mark those romantic dramas of the 30's and 40's before the class struggle and continental philosophy settled over the British mind. Gone, of course, are the Oxonian accents—the woman is an Austrian Jew and the boy employs a horrible patois for show business purposes—but the sensibilities still belong to those who have enough leisure to pick about all the subtleties of an old affair or a new love.

The title piece is also old-fashioned in a workmanlike way. Its premise is that in the dark, human beings are an amusing lot. The play begins in total blackness, out of which comes the sound of voices. Then, when the lights go up, and we, the audience, can see, it is the play's characters who, from now on, will be blind. Thus, from a blown fuse, author, director, and actors proceed to demonstrate how many jokes, pratfalls, and tickling misconceptions can be deduced. I must give them credit for ingenuity: they did manage to keep the play pumping along a good thirty minutes after I felt all the possible turns had been exhausted. One wonders what they might be capable of doing should they come up with a farce that has more than one comic idea in it.

What pleased me most about the play, however, was the reunion it afforded me with the old stock characters of English farce. There again was the well-intentioned, bumbling young man and the vacuous debutante the play's events will mercifully keep him from marrying; there, too, the sputtering, Old Guard father and the sweet little spinster neighbor who takes to tippling at the gin bottle while believing, in the dark, that it is a particularly tart lemon squash. Also on hand: the prissy aesthete (jazzed up a little into an outright queen with a Midlands accent), the comic foreigner with the funny way of speaking, and, finally, the sophisticated, fun-loving mistress, wise in the ways of the world, who gets young Decentchap out of his dull future and, in this case, back to his sculpture. This gallant little band used to travel across the Atlantic for a visit at least once every season; but in the last years, though still holding forth in their home country, they have been denied visas. American producers have heard that a revolution has

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taken place in English drama and are not anxious to be thought behind the times by serving up some *ancien régime* farce; perhaps, too, English theatrical officials consider this group a subversive and counter-revolutionary embarrassment, to be kept from the eyes of foreigners who are being told that a new Elizabethan Age is coming to the boards of the English playhouse. Whatever has caused that absence, I am glad that this company of conceits has been able to reach some accord with the new times, for there may be more of the stuff of theater in these worn, ragtail characters than in all the deep mystery of Harold Pinter, although *Black Comedy* is a long way from proving this point.

JACK RICHARDSON *writes regularly about the New York theater in these columns.*

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FREUDIANISM

Robert L. Zimmerman

PERHAPS NOTHING so well characterizes the problematic career of depth psychology over the past fifty years as the seemingly endless chain of contradictory theories—all claiming to point to the one psychological "truth"—which have been put forward by its devotees and practitioners. Indeed, so numerous are the conflicting interpretations of personality, illness, and treatment now available to the layman that any serious attempt to assess them all should probably lead us to wonder whether it is any longer even reasonable to take depth psychology seriously.

Yet it was once easy to do so, or at least much easier than it is today. There was a time when Freud convinced many of us that things like the Oedipus complex, infantile sexuality, repression, and the unconscious existed; that slips of the tongue, toilet training, dreams, and forgetting were far more significant than we had ever imagined; that, because of the reality and power of the unconscious, the present was but the past interestingly and deviously dressed up; and that, more generally, a naturalistic, "scientific" theory of man, based upon the thrusts and counterthrusts of instincts and drives, had been demonstrated. Perhaps it was Freud's passion, or his insistence, or what seemed like his utter clarity. Or perhaps it was just because we were ready at that time for that kind of story. In any case, somehow, he convinced us.

This is not to say that no one had reservations about Freud. Some, for example, were concerned with the sort of thing that was taken to be evidence for his theories. According to Freud, the fact that patients completed treatment, and were "cured," verified his theories because the treatment, and thus the cure, were based logically upon them. But therapists who based their treatment on non-Freudian theories *also* cured patients. Couldn't these therapists make the same claim for their own theories? And in the light of this situation, what did, or could, being "cured" prove?

Other critics expressed doubts about the nature of Freud's evidence from a different point of view. They wondered whether Freud's clinical findings, the *original* evidence for his theory, would not have been different had he investigated a more diverse group—that is, if his patients had not all been upper-middle-class Europeans. Still others were puzzled by the revisions, qualifications, and additions each of Freud's new books seemed to contain. With all these changes, was the theory still consistent? Were the changes an expression of Freud's flexibility and openmindedness, the non-dogmatic nature of his inquiry, or was that inquiry, and the methods it utilized, simply incapable of yielding definite and durable conclusions? And when all these and other doubts were doctrinairely rejected as "resistance," many *really* felt like resisting.

Nevertheless, most people continued to listen carefully to Freud; they treated his notions seriously and took them to be quite important. This was so, I suspect, because despite their reservations, they seemed to recognize themselves in what he said. They felt that Freud's inquiry, his investigation, had discovered and illuminated aspects of themselves which they had overlooked or, more likely, kept hidden; and that because his theory included these dimensions, these secret crevices of their psyches, it was a theory which embraced the full reality of man. Thus, even though Freud's portrait was candid, applied no cosmetic, and didn't conceal what men wanted their public portrait to conceal; even though it startled, frightened, embarrassed, profoundly threatened and outraged them, they were captured, converted, and calmed by the beauty of what appeared to be its truth.

And, of course, there was the presumed cash value: the theory led to a practice, a therapy, a way of loosening the neurotic bonds in which people were (or thought they were) fettered. The system promised that the wounds received in childhood, the wounds which still festered inside, would be healed. And, wonder of wonders, those who went into therapy *were* healed. Or so it seemed.

BUT THEN CAME the Freudians, both disciples and revisionists, who began to undermine the thought of the master and, I would suggest, the whole enterprise of depth psychology. They revised this notion and qualified that one, deleted a bit here and expanded a bit there, made central what had been peripheral and peripheral what had been central, extirpated one key concept and introduced another, decided what Freud must have "really" meant in certain passages and avoided others, and so on, throughout his shuddering corpus. It becomes clear, after navigating the murky, turbulent waters of Freudianism, that none of the fundamental thoughts of the master has remained invulnerable, that all of them are open to criticism and challenge. Whether it be the unconscious, the libido theory, the death instinct, the technique of free association, or the criteria for discharging patients as cured, there has emerged a Horney, an Erikson, a Reich, a Melanie Klein, or a Harry Stack Sullivan to put down the master. Each did so, of course, by citing clinical evidence: material, so to speak, from the couch. What is more, their rejections of Freud, which were reached by

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emulating both the style and the methodology laid down and used by him, necessarily carried as much weight as his initial assertions. His conclusions had been true because of clinical evidence, and, on the basis of the same criteria, so were theirs. The only trouble was that their conclusions contradicted his.

Now, since the Freudians have offered just as much evidence and the same kind of evidence for their replacement theories as Freud offered for his original ones, not only has it become theoretically impossible to adjudicate between the original claims and the counter-claims, but, more importantly, even the nature of the theories and of the evidence involved has become problematical. That is, it becomes questionable whether what happens in treatment—clinical material—is evidence at all, and whether the explanations which depth psychologists formulate to account for what they see are anything more than (sometimes) interesting speculations. For if therapeutic findings can both confirm and disconfirm the existence of the death instinct; if the progress of patients can count both for and against the assumption of the centrality of sexuality in the formation of illness; and if patients will validate dream interpretations based on contradictory theories about the existence of the Oedipus complex, then what this science takes as evidence is not evidence and what it formulates as theory is at best only loosely connected with facts and at worst completely arbitrary. Quite simply, if a theory and its negation can *both* be verified, then the theory is worthless, and if evidence cannot distinguish between contrary claims, it isn't evidence: it makes nothing evident.

Thus, in doing the old man in, and "refuting" one another, those who sought to carry on what he had begun ended up revealing the arbitrary and ambiguous, if not amorphous, methodology which the entire enterprise rested upon, thereby refuting the enterprise itself as well. And since Freud himself had used and worked within this methodology—indeed, it was he who invented it in the first place—it is both unfair and oversimplified, in distributing praise and blame within Freudianism, to praise the master and blame the pupils. If it is true to say that Freud's pupils were blind to the truth which he bequeathed them, it is equally true to assert that it was Freud who blinded them to it. The history of depth psychology is not an example of that process whereby a great man's work is sullied and humiliated by small, unknowing, insensitive disciples. On the contrary, the master's work, both in spirit and in letter, was carried on by his pupils, who merely made explicit what had already been clearly implied.

As one follows the history of the Freudian movement, then, one's feeling of confronting a serious enterprise slowly evaporates. In the face of an interminable stream of theories and counter-theories, evidence and counter-evidence—much of which strikes one as speculative and specious—the whole business, no doubt awfully serious in the minds of its practitioners, begins to look like a game: pump the patient and make up a myth. Since myths are unfalsifiable, nobody loses (or wins). But since, in addition, there is nothing so tiresome as an old myth, prolonging the game requires the constant manufacture of new myths. Anticipating what has by now become a cultural norm (as in the world of art), those myth-makers who masquerade as depth-psychologists seem to be engaged in a compulsive search for novelty: to accept what has been done is to be a has-been; what has happened is not what's happening. Looking back, one sees that the qualms we had about Freud's ideas should have been taken as seriously as the ideas themselves; Freud, it seems, only told us the first myth. Would it not have been better to expose it as such then?

MANY OF THESE suspicions regarding the nature of Freudianism are expressed, and elaborated upon fully, in *Depth Psychology: A Critical History*, by the European psychoanalyst, Dieter Wyss.* Specifically, Wyss marshals a number of telling arguments against such central themes as Freud's hedonism, and its extension into the context of interpersonal relations; Freud's dichotomy between pleasure and reality; Freud's atomism, i.e., his preoccupation with symptoms and disregard of the total person; Freud's solipsism, or what Wyss calls his "Cartesianism"; Freud's claim that the ego is a "piece" of the id, and that, in effect, the self is a secondary, epiphenomenal entity; Freud's sharp distinction between the conscious and the unconscious, the rational and the irrational, sleeping and waking; and so on.

With respect to all these, Wyss's arguments are provoking and, to my mind at least, quite effective. He argues, for example, that Freud's hedonism—his claim that men act only to get pleasure and avoid pain—is either false, insensitive to the realities of human behavior, or uninformative. For, on the one hand, people don't act to get *pleasure*, they act to get more money, more food, a new house, or a new sexual partner; and they don't act to avoid *pain*, they act to avoid personal injury, fights, accidents, hunger, rancid food, and the like. That is, pleasure and pain are abstractions, and men do not act either to get or to avoid abstractions; rather, they act in terms of concrete things, and pleasure, like redness, truth, and woman, is not a concrete thing. If, on the other hand, Freud means to distinguish activities like lovemaking, eating, listening to music, playing football, or even inflicting pain, from a feeling called "pleasure" which is produced by these activities and is *qualitatively* the same no matter which activity produces it, and to claim that people engage in the former only to get the latter, then, Wyss argues, Freud is grossly insensitive to the qualitative diversity of the pleasures men actually experience. The abovementioned feelings, which include such diverse pleasures as the inflicting of pain, sexual activity, the helping of another, aesthetic creation, and abstract thought, are crudely misdescribed if they are stripped of their differences, homogenized and abstracted as "pleasure" one and single. Finally, if Freud grants that pleasures are different, and that people seek the pleasure *of* lovemaking, reading poetry, going to the opera, taking a swim, etc., then, since what they seek is a plurality

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of pleasures, the reductive and monistic point of Freud's hedonism has been considerably blunted, and to say that they all seek pleasure is to say something uninformative. It is like saying, "Every color is red, but there are blue-reds, orange-reds, purple-reds, etc." What would a person be telling you if, having uttered this astonishing proposition, he answered your query about the color of your coat by saying, "It is red." He might as well have said, "It is blue or orange or purple or. . . ."

Extending this line of criticism, Wyss argues that Freud's antithesis between the pleasure principle and the reality principle is bogus, that this alleged opposition is not really an opposition at all. His argument here is reminiscent of Hegel, for it stresses the dialectical nature of the two poles. Pleasure, he points out, is experienced only when some transaction with reality takes place; it comes from, and couldn't exist without, reality. It is therefore a crude misconception to take reality as merely the source of pain and frustration; for it is also, and perhaps more fundamentally, the source of pleasure and fulfillment. As Wyss says:

> . . . in point of fact, whenever man engages in a *productive* relationship with *reality*, when he masters it, records it, plays with it or transforms it into a phantasy product, he experiences "pleasure." In other words, the *pleasure principle and the reality principle are not the fictive antitheses which Freud imagines them to be, but rather "pleasure" is generated when—and only when—the individual encounters and confronts reality in the widest possible sense of the word.* This applies with equal force to a baby sucking at its mother's breast and to an adult experiencing the pleasure of seeing some undertaking brought to a successful conclusion. *In either case, and indeed in every case, reality plays its part.* The concept of a pleasure principle diametrically opposed to a reality principle is a mere abstraction which has nothing to do with living reality, *for pleasure and reality are necessarily related to one another, fused together, by virtue of their common link in man.*

Wyss correctly observes that Freud's hedonism was a product of his reductionist, materialist metaphysics. He also points out that Freud (to his credit, although with no less inconsistency) was often unsure of his materialism. For example, Freud the reductionist believed that phenomenal experience, such as a feeling of sexual attraction toward one's mother, could be reduced to, and was in fact nothing but, "a quantity of excitation." On the other hand, Freud argued that this feeling of attraction is unconsciously repressed by the individual because it is sexual; it is precisely its *quality*, in other words, which is important in terms of psychodynamics. Herein lies the inconsistency. For if a sexual feeling toward one's mother is dealt with the way Freud says it is and for the reasons he gives, it cannot be merely a qualityless state of energetic excitation; as such, there would be no reason to repress it. Repression occurs not because of the *quantity* of a sexual impulse toward one's mother but because of its *quality*, because the impulse is precisely sexual and not, say, aesthetic. Freud's theory of unconscious repression, then, depended upon the assumption that quality is real, while his materialist metaphysics, as we have seen, depended upon the assumption that it is unreal. Freud seems not to have been able to reconcile these two demands.

A similar inconsistency is indicated by Wyss in Freud's analysis of drives. At times Freud spoke of drives as if they were purposive and goal-directed; at other times he spoke of them as if they were merely somatic events. For example, Freud often spoke of the sexual drive as *constituted* by its procreative goal; yet sometimes he spoke of it as goal-less somatic excitation. (To be sure, this goal-less somatic excitation motivates activity which results, more often than not, in procreation, but that is a contingent result and not a necessary part of the excitation as a sheer physical event.) Now, either a drive is sexual because more often than not it leads to procreation, or it more often than not leads to procreation because it is a sexual drive. Freud and the Freudians seesawed between these two conceptions; lest the distinction between them seem unimportant, let me point out that through minimal extension a difference in drive-interpretation can have serious consequences in therapy, where it becomes the difference between dealing with the content of a patient's actions and dealing with the events—physical, physiological, or what have you—underlying those actions. Let us consider, for instance, the case of a draft-card burner. How the draft-card burner is treated by a therapist will differ according to whether his professed goal is accepted as the cause of his behavior and dealt with as such, or rejected in favor of a causal explanation in terms, let us say, of libido theory. (In the latter case, the patient's rejection of governmental authority might be interpreted as a rejection by the patient of his father, a rejection based ultimately on the hatred felt by the patient toward his father when, in the Oedipal situation, the father's actions resulted in the frustration of the patient's libidinal impulses toward his mother.)

Freud's philosophical twists and turns can be most clearly seen in his complete turnabout with respect to the nature of human aggression. Wyss's discussion of this problem is particularly good. In his early phase, Freud believed that aggression was a reaction to a hostile, social reality. Man as such, *homo natura*, was not aggressive. Aggression, rather, was to be understood as a "secondary" phenomenon, resulting from a reflexive encounter with the environment. Theoretically, things could have been, or still could be, otherwise: if society were changed, man too would change. In this Freud followed Rousseau and the *philosophes*: the cause of the negativity of the human situation lay in the negative social order; to eliminate the negativity, one need only eliminate the order. Reich and many of the neo-Freudians concurred in this idea; others, like Ferenczi, Jung, and Melanie Klein, took a less rosy view.

On the other hand, Freud, in his late speculations, came to think of aggression as inherent in man, as (almost) original sin and therefore ineliminable. I refer, of course, to his final insights into the repetition compulsion and masochism, in-

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sights which led to his formulation of the theory of the death instinct and to the despair which pervades his late, so-called philosophical works. Freud came to believe that man, in his biological base, was driven by an urge to regress to an earlier, non-human state; and he interpreted aggression—both as externally directed sadistic or destructive activity and as internally directed masochistic activity—as the expression of that ineradicable urge. In a vision which was virtually demonic, Freud pictured man as a fallen creature, beyond hope or salvation. History led nowhere; it was merely the stage upon which those cosmic powers, Eros and Thanatos, performed their pointless and endless drama. Those, like Hegel, who saw history as the unfolding of Rationality, as the realization of Freedom on earth, were, to Freud, merely myopic.

FINALLY, one comes to see that the problems Freud confronted, whatever they appeared to be on the surface, were at bottom metaphysical. His solutions, it must be said, were unoriginal, since they were by and large a restatement of what Spinoza, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche had already said. To his credit, however, he at least realized the nature of the issues involved. The Freudians, it must also be said, were not so aware, but foolishly argued metaphysical issues in psychological and therapeutic terms. At the very least, they showed themselves in need of further therapy, since they never became conscious of what they were unconsciously about.

There is, of course, one group of depth psychologists which is not guilty of this charge. The group includes, among others, Jung, Rank, religiously-oriented psychologists like Victor Frankl, and existential or near-existential psychiatrists like Binswanger, Ey, and von Weizsäcker. We are, I might add, in Wyss's debt for his lucid presentation of the views of the philosophically-oriented depth psychologists, particularly those of the existentialist variety, since their own writings are rather impenetrable and, in most cases, not available in English. These philosophically-oriented psychologists are quite conscious of the nature of their enterprise. Indeed, the theories which they—in particular the existentialists among them—articulate are most often straightforwardly metaphysical, and derive, to a greater or lesser extent, from Bergson's vitalism, Husserl's phenomenology, and Heidegger's ontology. In fact, so great is the concern of these psychologists with Being, Beingness, Being-in-the-World, Being-Toward-Death, the Being-of-the-We, etc., that one begins to question the wisdom of calling them psychologists at all, rather than ontologists. To be sure, they still treat patients, but so have many men, wise and unwise, throughout the ages. And, of course, they "cure" these patients, but then again many patients become cured by getting older or by getting divorced or just by having somebody talk to them *a lot* about their problems.

Curing, it should be clear by now, ought not to be taken as proof of anything. Indeed, so far as treatment is concerned, it seems that the existential psychiatrists have only negative things to say. They condemn the Freudian method which, they feel, treats patients as mere objects. They urge therapists to relate to patients as an I to a Thou, to enter into the *Lebenswelt* of the patient, and to realize that the analytic-therapeutic situation is a *Gestaltkreis*.

But what, one wonders, does this imply for therapy? What, for instance, does a therapist, who believes all this, *do* when confronted by neurosis or psychosis? In what way should he act differently from a priest, a parent, a lover, a feeling person—all of whom can, and often do, share his ideas about the nature of human relationships? It would seem that either existential psychiatrists treat their patients as priests do, and are hence no different in kind from priests, or they do not treat their patients as priests do but rather as doctors do and hence, at least so far as practice is concerned, are really Freudians. Wyss also sees this as a dilemma but claims there is a third alternative. Unfortunately, he doesn't say what it is. He does, however, offer some interesting, true, and honest thoughts on the cures effected by depth psychology:

> It should be pointed out . . . that the successful cures achieved by psychotherapy are not the exclusive property of just a few schools but that on the contrary successful cures (which, due to the reservations to which this concept is also subject, are here understood as symptomatic cures) have been effected by each and every one of the various schools and doctrines. This is due to the fact that in every course of psychotherapy, although the methodology and the emphasis may vary from one school to another, the patient is always confronted with himself. Moreover, in every course of treatment, no matter what school or doctrine the therapist may espouse, the fact remains that a trained therapist applies himself to the patient's problems for a large number of hours and often over a period of years. These two factors would appear to constitute the true principle underlying therapeutic success. On the one hand the patient is required to confront himself, to confront his weaknesses (defense, facade, persona), his potential talents, his world of drives and his world of ideas and above all, he is required to confront his own past. On the other hand there is the conversation with the therapist which, whether it be more of a monologue as with the Freudians or more of a dialogue as with the neo-Freudians and the philosophically-oriented schools, enables the patient to live through new and often shattering experiences.

THUS, ALTHOUGH these philosophically-oriented depth psychologists are more conscious of the metaphysical nature of their speculations than the Freudians, their speculations gain nothing from their greater self-consciousness: both their psychologies remain metaphysics and, as such, not scientifically significant. As Wyss says in his concluding chapter:

> If the purpose of scientific inquiry is to organize data without making presuppositions and in accordance with a strictly objective empirical and logical method, then the scientific character of depth psychology is rendered questionable by virtue of its dependence on philosophical doctrines, and the relativity of interpretation to which this gives rise.

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It is, we might say, possible to retort to this charge by declaring that *every* science rests upon metaphysical assumptions and that *no* science is presuppositionless. But such a rejoinder is not enough, for it fails to distinguish between one kind of metaphysical assumption (e.g., that Nature is lawful), which is, although not provable, necessary and universal, leads scientists to common interpretations of data, and allows the sciences to develop, and a second kind of metaphysical assumption (e.g., the existence of the Oedipus complex), which, although not provable, is neither necessary nor universal, doesn't lead scientists to common interpretations, and hinders the development of a science by creating schools and warring factions within it. At the very least, the first kind of assumption has no element of arbitrariness about it, while the second is nothing if not arbitrary. Indeed, given that distinction, one might legitimately ask whether the first is a metaphysical assumption at all.

Freud, then, and all his heirs, whether consciously or not, have been engaged in metaphysical speculation, system-building in the classic sense. Interestingly enough, while Freud, in Vienna at the turn of the century, was undertaking to inject metaphysics into psychology, the most modern school of philosophy, in the form of the positivism of the Vienna Circle, was at the very same time rejecting metaphysics as a legitimate field of inquiry. (*It did so on the ground* that metaphysical claims and theories, since they implied and were implied by no empirical events, failed to satisfy the conditions under which statements have meaning. They thus were taken to be *empty* of meaning or meaningless.) One is tempted to say that in Vienna, at the beginning of the 20th century, the spirit of metaphysics, having been evicted from its chambers within philosophy, took a stroll across town and found lodgings at Freud's place, in the new science of psychology. Freud, it seems, should have checked the new tenant's references.

ROBERT L. ZIMMERMAN, *here making his first appearance in* COMMENTARY, *teaches philosophy at Rutgers. Mr. Zimmerman has written for a number of philosophical journals.*

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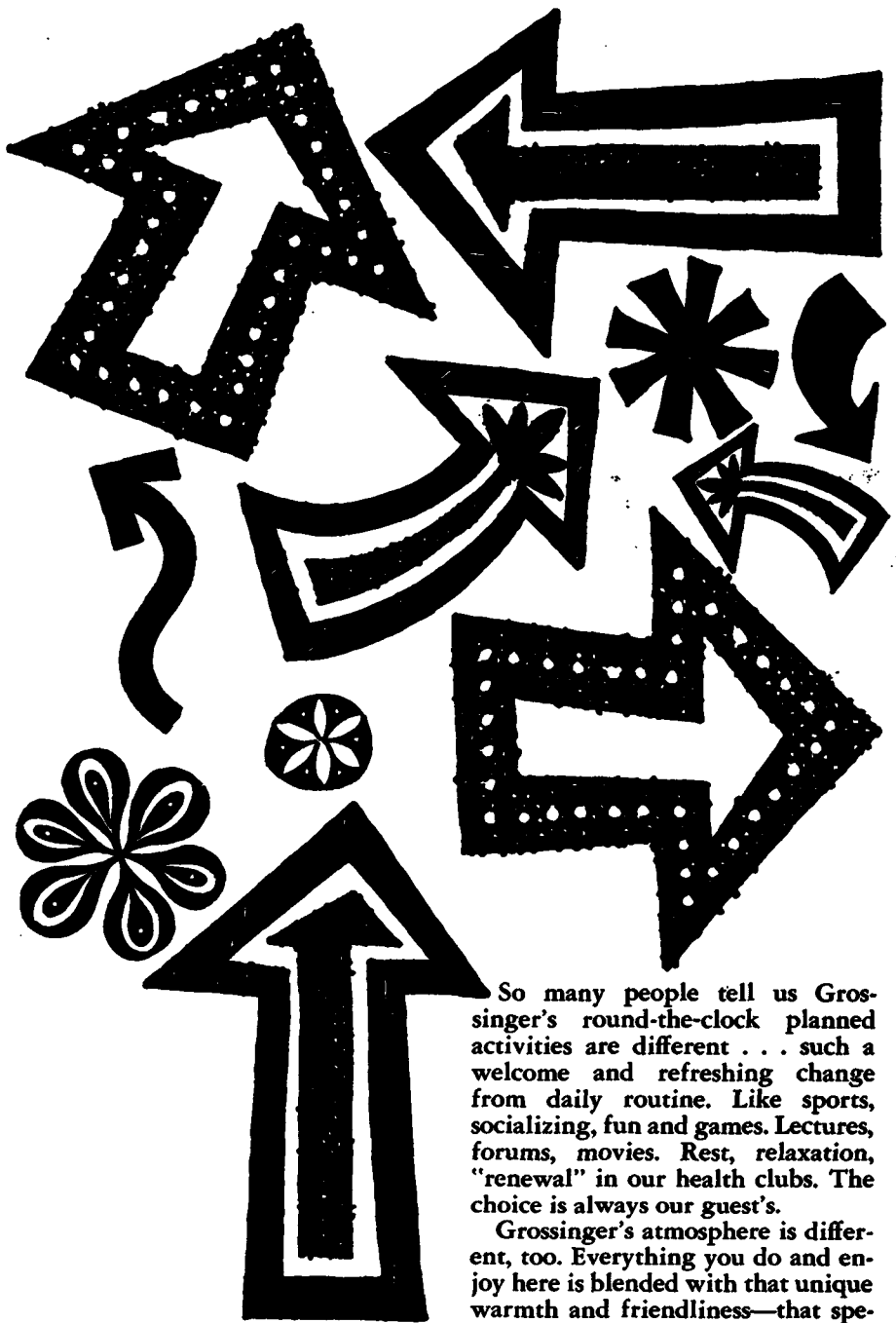

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A LOST WORLD?

THE GOLDEN TRADITION. Edited by LUCY S. DAWIDOWICZ. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 502 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by DAN JACOBSON

THE GOLDEN TRADITION is an anthology of autobiographical writings and biographical sketches of Eastern European Jews, covering the period from the middle of the 18th century to just before the outbreak of World War II. To speak simply of "autobiography" or "biography," however, is to give a wrong idea of the nature of the anthology; for the extracts are not chosen to reveal the personal histories of the contributors, or the details of the everyday life of the groups to which they belonged, but rather to exemplify and illuminate the variety of the intellectual cross-currents which agitated the masses of the Jews within the Pale of Settlement, as well as the minority who managed to escape from the Pale to metropolitan centers like Odesssa and St. Petersburg.

The book (which, incidentally, has been most handsomely produced by the publishers) contains also a long, informative, and closely argued historical introduction by its editor, Lucy S. Dawidowicz. Together with its accounts of the major phases of Jewish intellectual development, Mrs. Dawidowicz's introduction describes the changing social circumstances which the various religious, cultural, and political movements both reflected and in turn affected. She discusses the established rabbinic orthodoxy which ruled the lives of so many until the very end; the challenge to that orthodoxy made during the latter half of the 18th century by Hasidic Judaism on the one hand and the *Haskalah* or Enlightenment from the West on the other; the emergence of schools of secular historians and imaginative writers in Yiddish and Hebrew; the tendencies toward Russification and assimilation to which some of the wealthier and more highly educated were the first to succumb; the development of the Zionist movement and of revolutionary socialism among the masses; the emigrations and the attempts by organized Jewry to take part in the short-lived parliaments that preceded the revolution in Russia and followed upon World War I in Poland, Lithuania, and elsewhere.

The introduction, as can be seen even from the outline I have just given, covers a great deal of ground in its ninety pages; and perhaps it suffers from being overcrowded with names which will be unfamiliar to many of the readers for whom the book is presumably intended. On the other hand, it could be said that this crowdedness is in itself the most striking proof of the case that Mrs. Dawidowicz is arguing. For her introduction, and the anthology as a whole, are more than a collection of facts and documents for their own sake, more than a keeping of the records, important though that aspect of the work must be. As historian and anthologist, Mrs. Dawidowicz wishes to show decisively that "East European Jewry was not, as the sentimentalists see it, forever frozen in utter piety and utter poverty," and she also wishes to make her readers feel that precisely because of the community's intellectual variety and vitality, its representatives can still, in conducting their debates with one another, speak to us today. "East European Jewry," she writes, "was cruelly cut down. But vital elements of its culture survive. Perhaps we, heirs of that culture, can continue its tradition of conserving Jewish identity by fusing the old and the new." In other words, the reader would be doing less than justice to the seriousness with which the anthology has been conceived and executed if he does not ask himself just how relevant the arguments, hopes, expectations, and exhortations recorded in these pages really are to his own life. Can he use them, draw

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sustenance from them? And if so, of what kind could it be?

THE ANTHOLOGY certainly brings together impressive evidence of the range of the intellectual ideas and possibilities which the Jews of Eastern Europe tried to live by, in spite of all the disadvantages they labored under: their poverty, their imprisonment within the Pale, the ever-present threat or reality of violence with which they were confronted, their powerlessness in the hands of a government whose savage authoritarianism was tempered only by corruption and inefficiency, and whose arbitrariness never basically affected its persistent, implacable hostility to the Jews and the Jewish religion. Of course there is plenty of evidence within the anthology, either directly or to be read between the lines, of frustration, boredom, and fear; of a paralyzing, and paralyzed, provincialism; of a sectarian zealotry that did not hesitate to call in the Tsarist police to settle doctrinal disputes; of the development of the habits of informing, cringing, prevaricating.

Under such circumstances, these responses were predictable. What could never have been predicted, what remains unique, were the efforts that were made so unremittingly by so many to rise above their circumstances, or at least to try to escape in the imagination from them. The fantasy and high-spiritedness of Hasidic legend; the absorption of the *mitnagdim* in Talmudic scholarship; the pathetically stiff, abstract, ignorant, hopeful invocations of "the heavenly daughter, Enlightenment" on the part of the early *maskilim*; the development of journals and institutions of historical scholarship; the energetic attempts made by people who were losing or had already lost their religious faith to work out some kind of rationale for the loyalty they yet retained to the community from which they sprang—all these are movingly illustrated within the anthology. The paradoxical effect that the anthology had on me as a whole, in fact, was to bring the people and the urgency of their intellectual ambitions somewhat closer, even while the movements and ideas of which they speak and to which they devoted their lives became in a sense more remote than they had been before.

Perhaps I can best indicate what I mean by speaking of the late, secular movements mentioned in the last paragraph. Zionism is the most striking example of these, but there were also the cultural nationalism or autonomism upheld by Simon Dubnow, the great historian, and the particular separatist variety of revolutionary socialism that flourished among the Bundists. (Plekhanov's famous gibe was that the Bundists were merely "Zionists who are afraid of getting seasick.") The strife between these three groups was perhaps as violent as that which had taken place a generation and more previously between Hasidim, *mitnagdim*, and *maskilim*. But from the point of view of today, one can say that the later disputants had more in common, both positively and negatively, than they themselves could possibly have realized.

Negatively, they shared a loss in the belief in God, in the religious mission of Jewry, in the meaningfulness of Jewish suffering and privation. However, if one reads the most impressive works to have emerged from members of these groups—Dubnow's *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland*, say, or Chaim Weizmann's *Autobiography*—one is bound to feel that even rationalists like Weizmann and Dubnow, men so given to a rather disdainful, mordant skepticism and empiricism, derived an enormous part of their moral and intellectual strength from their closeness to the masses to whom religious faith was an unquestioned reality, still; that the totality of their involvement with the Jewish destiny, and their conviction of its transcendent importance, were drawn from the living evidence all around them of the community's own involvement with itself, its own conviction of its importance in the ultimate scheme of things.

NOTHING comparable to that organically functioning religious-national community, united by belief, language, and immemorial experience, exists today. To say this is not, I hope, to slight the historical significance of the reassertion of Jewish sovereignty in Israel, or the strength

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and self-consciousness of the Jewish community in the United States, or the intensity of the longing among the remaining Jews in Russia and Eastern Europe to keep in touch with their kinfolk elsewhere. Nor is it to regard as unimportant and inconsequential those cultural traits and predispositions which (as I can confirm from my own experience) the descendants of East European Jews still have in common in countries as distant from one another as the United States, South Africa, England, and Israel, and which can range from tastes in food and jokes to intellectual aptitudes and political inclinations. (It seems to me something of a myth that the Israelis of East European descent are all that much unlike their contemporaries in the *galut*.) But to speak of the difference between these bonds and continuities and the community which once existed in Eastern Europe is to be confronted with an abyss which a book like *The Golden Tradition* does not really enable me, intellectually, to cross.

"Western Jews," Mrs. Dawidowicz writes—and in context this is a reference to the French and German Jews—"could not resist the lures of enlightenment, emancipation, and the opportunity to enter the larger society. They rushed to embrace it, though emancipation often turned out to be a mirage and enlightenment a dead end. . . . Eastern Europe was different, and East European Jews responded differently to enlightenment and emancipation." But did they really? Was the ability and willingness of the masses of East European Jews to resist the "lure" of emancipation ever seriously put to the test within the Tsar's domains? Weren't the many hundreds of thousands of Jews who forsook Russia and Poland for the United States and elsewhere seeking enlightenment and emancipation, however inarticulately and unknowingly? Weren't they trying to enter a larger society—the modern world, in fact? Have the overwhelming majority of their descendants shown themselves any the less eager to penetrate the societies in which they find themselves than the French and German Jews once were?

It is of course one of the most terrible ironies of history that the Holocaust which brought to an end the centuries of Jewish communal existence in Eastern Europe should have originated in the "modern" and "emancipated" West toward which so many of the Jews in the East had hopefully turned. It was the country of Voltaire (himself a violent anti-Semite) and Rousseau in which the power of political anti-Semitism was first revealed; and that of Kant, Schiller, and Goethe which brought racial mass-slaughter on a hitherto unknown scale to the "backward" East. Yet it does seem as though this has hardly affected the profound attachment of most Jews in the English-speaking countries, and indeed of most Jews of European origin in Israel, to the intellectual inheritances of the Enlightenment: to modernity, to liberalism, to "progressive" political views, to agnosticism and atheism. Perhaps one can even say that the disaster has had the not altogether surprising effect of making their attachment to these large, vague ideas or attitudes deeper than it was before, and of making them less eager than ever to look back.

At the same time, to those who do look back, the community from which their parents and grandparents came appears quite unlike anything they can even conceive of existing today: it appears so singular in its religious and social morphology as to be even more distant from them than the past of the countries in which they now live. So the task of bringing together the old and the new, of which Mrs. Dawidowicz speaks, is an immensely problematic one—perhaps an impossible one without the aid of religious belief. But I can't close without adding two things. The first is simply that the old and the new will certainly not be brought together in any form if the English-speaking heirs of East European Jewry are allowed to remain totally ignorant of the past. The second is to say again that though many of the debates and arguments in the anthology may seem remote, the people who conduct them never do. Most readers of COMMENTARY who go through this book will recognize in it not just the great names, from Solomon Maimon to Leon Trotsky, but also, I think, something of themselves and their friends.

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HINDSIGHT

IRONIES OF HISTORY: ESSAYS ON CONTEMPORARY COMMUNISM. By ISAAC DEUTSCHER. *Oxford. 278 pp. $5.75.*

Reviewed by MYRON RUSH

THE FORECASTS OF prophets, politicians, and social scientists have been dealt harsh blows by events of the last decade. Border clashes between the USSR and Communist China and calls to the "fraternal" people of the other side to overthrow its leaders; 400,000 U.S. troops fighting to contain Communism on the Asian continent, while the President of the United States seeks to build bridges to the Communist states of East Europe; desperate struggle in the Chinese Communist leadership even in Mao's lifetime, with millions of non-Communists involved as they never were in Soviet factional strife: who foresaw such things a decade ago?

Mr. Deutscher does not claim infallibility for the comments and predictions he has made over the past fourteen years and here collected in his new book. Yet he does invite his readers to judge his forecasts, and he himself is proud of them. Thus, when Stalin died:

> an epoch of change was opening in the Communist camp. A few of us here in the West, and we were very, very few indeed, saw the coming change and analyzed its first symptoms. We were decried as wishful thinkers and false prophets. . . .

Actually, a close look at the contents of this book reveals more than a little wishful thinking and false prophesy.

The company of those who, like Deutscher, foresaw that Stalin's death would lead to a crisis in Soviet politics, was not as small as he now remembers it. However, not many shared Deutscher's view that it was to be fundamentally a crisis of the regime, and not just a crisis of the leadership. "Eventually the crisis can be solved only in one of two ways: through a democratic regeneration of the Revolution or through counter-revolution." Democratic regeneration, of course, could only come from the working class in its struggle against the bureaucracy; it could not be bestowed by the leadership.

Actually, when Stalin died Deutscher expected little from his heirs, who had "no character, no mind, no political life of their own." Later, after they had brought about far-reaching "reform from above," Deutscher acknowledged his error, although with a certain reticence: Stalin's epigones had shown far more capacity for reform "than was generally expected of them." On the other hand, the political consciousness of the Soviet people proved less vigorous and healthy than Deutscher had expected. The two errors, fortunately, tended to cancel each other out, so that the hoped-for solution to the crisis remained as before. The Soviet leaders, by initiating de-Stalinization, had given rise to processes which they could not control and which "were certain to transform profoundly the whole moral and political climate of Communism . . . in a spirit of socialist democracy."

Throughout the first years after Stalin's death, Deutscher continued to base his hopes on the masses in their opposition to the Soviet bureaucracy, despite their tardiness in fulfilling his expectations. Even at the end of 1956, he believed that the day might not be far off when the multitudes would come out in Red Square, not to demand bread, like the leaderless Petrograd masses who toppled the Tsarist regime in February 1917, but to demand equality. The appearance of Sputnik in October 1957, however, altered the basis of his optimistic predictions. Sputnik affected Deutscher almost as powerfully as it did Khrushchev, persuading him that "Soviet progress is now likely to proceed by leaps and bounds," thus radically altering the political climate. He now foresaw a *weakening* of antagonisms between bureaucracy and workers, but he did not take this to mean that the motive force for progress was running down; on the contrary, detente between workers and bureaucracy would be accompanied by the further growth of civil liberties.

After Khrushchev's ouster, seven years later, Deutscher found it nec-

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essary to make still another reassessment of the prospects for Soviet development. The bureaucracy had failed to achieve the economic progress on which Deutscher had relied for the furtherance of civil liberties. Again, as before 1957, he condemned it as corrupt. He acknowledged, however, that the conflict between bureaucracy and people had not been exacerbated after Stalin's death, as he had expected, but rather was greatly mitigated. He was now disturbed and even alarmed: "Society at large is still inarticulate. The working class remains politically mute." The ruling oligarchy had proved able to shield itself from social control. The reason was, according to Deutscher, that the antagonism between rulers and ruled in the Soviet Union is less fundamental than in other social systems since it is not a class antagonism.

Thus the crisis that followed Stalin's death had not been fundamental, as Deutscher had expected it to be, and there had been no need to solve it by a democratic regeneration of the revolution. He is, of course, not reconciled to irresponsible rule by the Soviet bureaucracy. But if the revolution remains for him an object of wishful thinking, at least its regeneration is no longer the subject of his false prophesy.

ONE REASON why Deutscher's expectations were disappointed is that he counterposed the "masses" to the "bureaucracy" (which he left virtually undifferentiated) and therefore overlooked the crucial significance of divisions within the bureaucracy. Indeed, it is hard to see how fundamental changes in the Soviet regime could come about in the absence of acute factional conflict among the leaders. Such conflict might give rise to a deep struggle among the regime's chief institutions (the party apparatus and government bureaucracy, at least, and perhaps the army and political police as well). This, in turn, would probably lead to efforts to win support from particular groups among the Soviet public. Only if the outcome of such an institutional struggle were the defeat of the highly disciplined party apparatus, perhaps, would there be a significant widening of participation in Soviet politics, basic decentralization of political power, and broad extension of civil liberties.

No doubt Deutscher is right that there is disaffection among Soviet youth and intellectuals, who want more freedom, and among the workers and peasants, disappointed at the slow and halting rise in their living standards. Doubtless, too, the right of the ruling group to rule has been increasingly called into question as the greater number of their predecessors in the top leadership has come under attack. But such dissidence in Soviet society is not likely in my view to have great political effect unless the rulers are weakened by their own internal divisions.

What are the current prospects for such an internal division? Until now, the post-Khrushchev leadership has maintained an impressive facade of unity, but behind it there has been considerable evidence of sharp factional struggle. Unless such struggle deepens markedly (as I, for one, expect it to), fundamental change in the Soviet political system ought not to be expected in the immediate years ahead.

Deutscher's title, *Ironies of History*, reflects his special understanding of history as providing a fulfillment of political ideas in unexpected ways. Thus Stalin, the arch-enemy in the cold war and the original target of the containment policy, himself practiced self-containment, according to Deutscher, so that the West's cold-war strategy was really unnecessary. Stalin was also the instrument whereby Trotsky's economic program was realized, in circumstances where Trotsky himself would not have been effective. But if history made good use of Stalin for its ironic purposes, it had apparently no further use, in 1923, for Lenin. "If Lenin had lived longer he would have had to become either a Stalin or a Trotsky, for these two men embodied two opposed solutions to the dilemmas of the 1920's. Yet Lenin could probably become neither a Stalin nor a Trotsky—in a sense both these characters were blended in him. Illness and death gripped him while he stood at a crossroads at which he was incapable of choosing any of the

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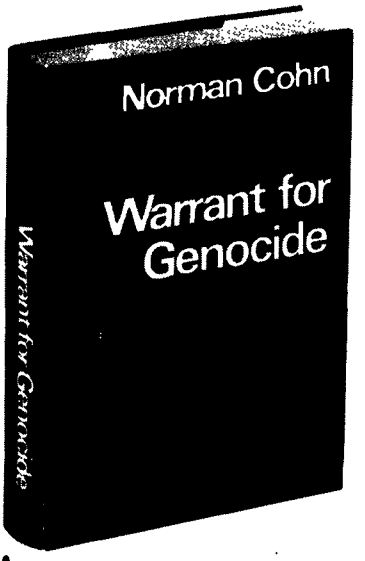

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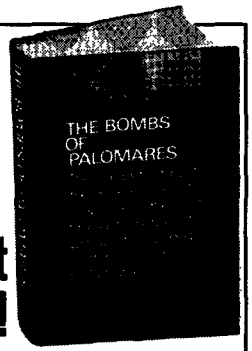

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roads that led ahead." One is reminded here of Trotsky's judgment on Julius Martov and his followers on the day the Bolsheviks seized power. "You are bankrupt. You have played out your role. Go where you belong: to the dustheap of history." But did Lenin really only have two choices in 1923? And was he really *incapable* of deciding or just incapacitated by his third stroke? Had Deutscher been more successful in his predictions, he might be more credible when he tells us that the things which did not happen in history could not have happened.

Deutscher may not be responsible for more wishful thoughts and false prophesies than the rest of us, but one wonders why he collected his inside the covers of a book. If he wanted to make his errors an object of instruction for others, he should have provided an introduction that would let his readers know where he went wrong, and why. As it is, the reader must do the job himself and, unless he happens to be preparing a review of the book, he probably won't.

BIRTH OF A PHILOSOPHER

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BERTRAND RUSSELL. By BERTRAND RUSSELL. *Atlantic-Little Brown. 356 pp. $7.95.*

Reviewed by GEORGE LICHTHEIM

IN AN INSTALLMENT of his autobiography preceding the volume under review, Bertrand Russell had this to say about the Whig aristocrats who headed the Russell clan during most of the Victorian era:

> My grandfather, whom I remember vividly, was born on the 18th of August 1792, a fortnight after the poet Shelley. . . . The French Revolution was just getting under way, and it was in the month of his birth that the monarchy fell. . . . His first (unpublished) work contained an ironical dedication to Pitt, then still Prime Minister. . . . He visited Napoleon in Elba, and had his ear pulled by the Great Man, as was usual. When Napoleon returned from Elba, my grandfather, who had been for two years a member of Parliament,

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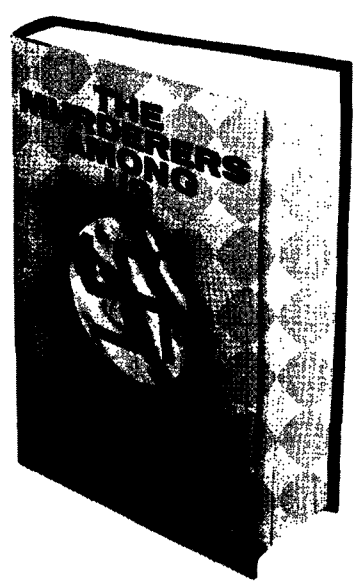

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made a speech urging that he should not be opposed. The Government, however, being in the hands of the Tories, decided otherwise, and the Battle of Waterloo was the result.

The statesman in question, Lord John Russell, died in 1878, when the future philosopher was six years old. There are unlikely to have been many conversations between them, about Waterloo or anything else. Still, it is nice to have this vignette stamped upon the record, as a reminder that there is more to Russell's Voltaireanism than the conscious acquisition of a style proper to the man. The *philosophe* who lurks in the empiricist–successor of Locke and Hume: both great favorites with the French writers who collectively produced the Enlightenment–is not accidentally the grandson of a Whig who in 1815 counseled restraint and tolerance for Napoleon. The Russells were on the side of liberalism, hence of France, whereas the Tories preferred Germany (they still do, though less noisily). If one likes, one may also attribute some significance to the fact that Lord John's advice was not taken. In 1830, though, he had the satisfaction of becoming a member of Lord Grey's Whig administration, the July Revolution in Paris having scared the Crown and the oligarchy into abandoning the Tories for a while. His grandson has had to content himself with triumphs of a different order.

Bertrand Russell's heredity is too much part of the story to figure merely as background. In the present volume he fills out some of the blanks in the earlier record. His parents, Lord and Lady Amberley, were on the radical side of the Victorian intellectual cleavage. They were friends of John Stuart Mill, championed unpopular causes (such as birth control and votes for women), and held unconventional views about marriage. Unluckily for the boy, they died before he had reached his fourth year, and he was left in the care of stern maiden aunts and old Lady Russell, an authoritarian who combined Whig principles with relentless moralizing. He claims to have been a happy child, which seems doubtful, and a lonely adolescent, which is hardly surprising. The gloom was somewhat lightened by his early discovery of the beauty of mathematics–a realm of formal purity and absolute certainty which made up for some of the earthly disappointments. Philosophers are born, not made (at any rate those who possess reasoning powers beyond the normal). However, genius aside, his Spartan upbringing must have helped to launch Russell upon the career that made him famous.

As an autobiographer, Russell combines formal restraint with intellectual candor to a degree uncommon in this age, when a Rousseauist addiction to verbal extravagance and romantic self-deception is the quality most highly prized in biographies and memoirs. But then he stems from a tradition of aristocratic liberalism not easily merged with the sentimentality of the middle class. Here and there (e.g., in the passages where he relates his amorous affairs) it is even possible to discern a trace of frivolity. He had to work hard to effect this liberation from a puritanical background. Certainly he got little help from his relatives. When in 1893, at the age of twenty-one, he married Alys Pearsall Smith–five years his senior and an American Quaker girl, hence unsuitable–they did all they could to wreck the engagement. As usual he had his way in the end, but the early scars remained. He is a trifle reticent as to what exactly caused the marriage to collapse a decade later, but it is plain enough that there was a clash between his upbringing and the natural vigor of his sensuality. The strains were violent enough to bring on recurrent moods of suicidal depression. And all this while he was in the throes of writing his first great work!

HERE ONE enters what for a layman is dangerous ground, mathematics not being everyone's hobby. Fortunately, Russell in this fragment of his autobiography (the record terminates with the outbreak of war in 1914) dwells more upon the manner in which he arrived at his discoveries than upon their precise significance. An interesting point emerges, namely the crucial (to Russell) importance of being suddenly confronted with a blinding new light. He describes two such mental revolutions, one relating to logic, the other to ethics. The first occurred in the summer of 1900 when he had gone to Paris to attend an international congress of philosophy, made the acquaintance of Peano and his mathematical logic, was overwhelmed by a sudden revelation, and thereupon underwent a period of great intellectual excitement lasting for about a month and culminating in important logical discoveries. This was followed early in 1901 by an acute depression probably brought on by the impending breakdown of his marriage, and it was then that he had his second conversion: this time to a new conception of the moral life. The incident that touched off the crisis was a painful heart-attack suffered by Mrs. Whitehead, with whom the Russells were staying. The distress this caused the visitor brought on a quasi-religious experience which Russell describes as follows:

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Suddenly the ground seemed to give way beneath me, and I found myself in quite another region. Within five minutes I went through some such reflections as the following: the loneliness of the human soul is unendurable; nothing can penetrate it except the highest intensity of the sort of love that religious teachers have preached; whatever does not spring from this motive is harmful, or at best useless; it follows that war is wrong, that a public school education is abominable, that the use of force is to be deprecated, and that in human relations one should penetrate to the core of loneliness in each person and speak to that.

The passage is of great interest for judging Russell as a person and for an understanding of his views. "At the end of those five minutes" (he writes), "I had become a completely different person. For a time a sort of mystic illumination possessed me." Some doubt as to the permanent effect of this experience arises from his account of his life in the years following which does not reflect any very marked concern for others. One episode at least exhibits him in a thoroughly discreditable light. Nonetheless, it does seem evident that he had undergone something of a conversion, if not to a different mode of feeling, at any rate to a different set of principles. To a reader (though not to the author, who has a blind spot on the subject) it seems plain that the sight of a helpless woman in distress activated the long-dormant anxiety felt by the boy many years earlier at the loss of his mother. The fashionable absurdity today consists in supposing that these derivations exhaust the meaning of a spiritual crisis. What Russell experienced was clearly more than an uprush of self-pity, since his outlook changed and he acquired the ability to feel for and with others. His emotional capacity, to put it crudely, had been blocked, and some of the barriers had now come down, though the mystical exaltation did not last.

What did last was the queer set of more or less Tolstoyan principles he acquired at that moment: war was wrong and public schools were wrong (he had not attended one, but the army crammer to whom he was sent by his benighted relatives before escaping to Cambridge was no great joy either). Russell tells us quite solemnly in the same passage:

> Having been an Imperialist, I became during those five minutes a pro-Boer and a Pacifist. Having for years cared only for exactness and analysis, I found myself filled with semi-mystical feelings about beauty, with an intense interest in children, and with a desire almost as profound as that of the Buddha [*sic*] to find some philosophy which should make human life endurable.

The world was to be saved by love. It was the time of the Boer war, hence Russell—having until that moment followed the lead of Bernard Shaw and the Webbs in taking the imperialist side—spontaneously became a pro-Boer. That the Boers were not particularly pleasant people, notably in their treatment of Africans, did not have to concern him: they were a small

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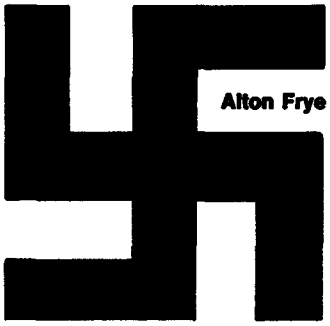

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nation trampled upon by a brutal Empire. But how were they to be aided? Not by force, for Russell had become a pacifist (he had to go back on the absoluteness of this creed in 1940, when Britain was the last holdout of anti-Hitler resistance and pacifism had become morally impossible). The way to help the Boers—and all other oppressed on later occasions—was to denounce the oppressors, for politics had now been revealed as a moral issue: the weak suffering the violence of the strong. Ought the weak to resist? Probably, though Russell as a pacifist would take no responsibility for that. His duty was simple: it was to proclaim that war and oppression were abominable. This, more or less, is what he has been doing ever since, though with occasional backslidings into bellicism, e.g., in 1948 when he so far forgot himself as to advocate the use of the nuclear bomb against Stalin: another brutal oppressor, probably identified in his mind with whatever caused Mrs. Whitehead to suffer such atrocious pains in 1901.

BUT THE psychological derivation is not very relevant. All sorts of people have come to all sorts of conclusions by way of unconscious identification with parents or friends. What matters is that Russell seems never to have grasped the difference between discovering a new principle in mathematics and acquiring a new set of convictions in ethics. To him one illumination was as real and compelling as the other. Just as in September 1900 he had suddenly "seen" the new mathematical logic, so in the following year he "saw" with equal clarity the need for a new ethic (or an old one that had not been taken seriously). And it was a matter of endless surprise to him that otherwise sane and well-meaning people—his friend Alfred Whitehead among them—were unable to share his vision.

Whitehead, indeed, was destined to be a puzzle to Russell, once their joint labors on *Principia Mathematica* (1911) had come to an end. Personal eccentricities apart—Russell's account of their relationship hints at a streak of barely controlled irrationality in the older man—there was Whitehead's Platonism, his general fondness for metaphysics, and his indifference to Russell's political concerns, which were those of an ardent pre-1914 liberal. To an outsider, Whitehead seems the more interesting thinker of the two, brooding in his cloudy fashion over problems that never troubled Russell. If Collingwood's judgment can be trusted, Whitehead rediscovered Hegel without having read him. What is certain is that Russell, who *had* read Hegel, failed to understand him. This may be the reason why to someone brought up on German philosophy (such as the reviewer) Russell has always seemed to lack an entire dimension: the historical.

For proof one may consult his writings on political and social matters. Setting aside the nonsense he has uttered on a great many topics of which clearly he had no knowledge, there is at the core of Russell's thinking about politics an unresolved dilemma already inherent in the conversion experience described in the autobiography: of certain practical choices it is asserted that they are required by morality, but the ultimate source of moral authority is never clarified. It cannot be religious, since Russell has no use for religion. It cannot be simply utilitarian, for there are occasional references to absolutes—love, beauty, "the good life"—which seem to reflect a hierarchy of values not reducible to hedonism. Yet the principle governing his moral assumptions is never stated. Is it then purely arbitrary?

In his *History of Western Philosophy*, Russell comes close to suggesting that the ultimate choice in morals and politics is not reducible to rational argument. In a passing reference to the incompatibility of democratic and Nietzschean doctrines, he observes: "I do not myself believe that this disagreement can be dealt with by theoretical arguments such as might be used in a scientific question. Obviously those who are excluded from the Nietzschean aristocracy will object, and thus the issue becomes political rather than theoretical." He might have added that the only way to deal with people who are serious about exterminating others is to

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kill them first, but perhaps such a suggestion would have been thought shocking in a philosopher.

The problem is a real one, and Russell is not to be blamed for not having solved it. Those critics—whether Christians or Communists—who have rebuked him for failing to rise above the unsolved dilemmas of late Victorian rationalism, are themselves weighed down by theoretical and practical failures on a scale to match the evident dissolution of liberal individualism. The fact remains that Russell, by pushing to an extreme the doctrines he imbibed as a young man, has unwittingly laid bare their inadequacy. Rational principles of conduct supposedly abstracted from a fixed and unchanging human nature whose dispassionate study will yield a science of morals and politics—are there many people left who *believe* this sort of thing? It is to Russell's honor that he has kept the flag flying for over half a century, but the attempt to reconcile the rationalist myth with historical reality must surely by now be reckoned a failure.

LABOR PAINS

THE LABOR REVOLUTION. By GUS TYLER. *Viking. 279 pp. $6.50.*

Reviewed by LEWIS A. COSER

IN THIS BOOK, Gus Tyler—the assistant president of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union and the director of its Department of Politics, Education, and Training—replies to the critical attacks on the complacency, stodginess, and decline of vision of the labor movement which have in recent years been launched by such men as Paul Jacobs, Harvey Swados, and Solomon Barkin. The author's heart is in the right place, and one may well sympathize with his effort, but the result, it must be said, is far from convincing.

Throughout these pages, the term "revolution" appears with a kind of obsessive repetitiveness. It almost seems as though Mr. Tyler were attempting to revive the flagging spirit of the unions by the stimulant of word magic. In fact, however, there is no new, let alone revolutionary, thought in the house of labor—or in this book. We are merely served up all the old clichés, spiced with a sauce compounded of unwarranted optimism and pious hopes.

Tyler suggests that the 1950's and 1960's were a period of "consolidation" for the labor movement, but that the coming decades "will be an era of expansion; hence, an era of aspiration." As vast new white-collar strata are organized, as professional and women workers flock to the unions, as the newly organized South becomes a source of union strength, as an aging leadership is replaced by dynamic new men, the union movement, according to Tyler, will experience a reenactment on a higher level of the heroic decade of the 30's, a "new burst of idealism."

But where is the evidence for all this? There have, to be sure, been some recent successes in the organization of teachers and government employees, but the fact is that the vast majority of white-collar workers remains unorganized. As Tyler himself notes, even the American Federation of Teachers, the fastest-growing of the new white-collar unions, includes only five per cent of America's two million teachers. Moreover, the various organizational drives in the South over a number of years have all failed disastrously. Thus, it seems preposterous to assume that the union movement, as presently constituted, has a realistic chance of organizing the new professionals of the suburbs.

Meanwhile, the nature of the American labor force is changing rapidly, as manufacturing industries lose in relative weight while service trades, as well as government employment, increase. Having traditionally been concentrated in manufacturing, and having failed to make up its losses from that sector, the labor movement has declined steadily in recent years, notwithstanding Tyler's Pollyannish claims. The percentage of organized workers in the labor force was smaller in 1965 than in 1957, and I have not yet seen any evidence that would suggest a reversal of this trend in the near future.

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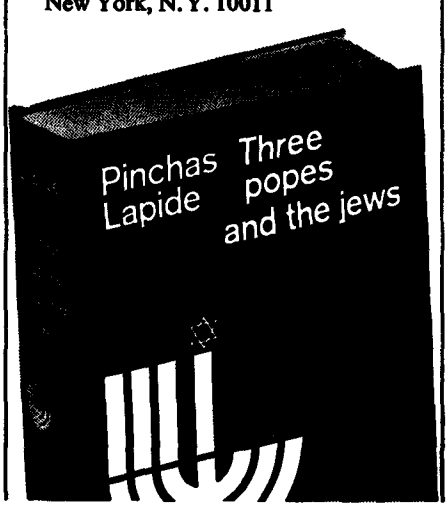

No one, of course, will deny that there exists a new type of white-collar labor force that might possibly be organized, but the question is whether the AFL-CIO will be able to do so. For between the idea and the reality falls the shadow of Meany's minions. There is no reason to believe that the hierarchy of over-aged labor statesmen who periodically meet in Florida to have a good time and release the usual platitudes to thoroughly bored reporters, have the capacity to restructure their movement so as to make it capable of a serious appeal to the unorganized part of the labor force. Hiding their satisfied acceptance of the status quo under a thin veneer of liberal rhetoric, these union leaders seem to be concerned only with preserving their vested interests in the old order.

Mr. Tyler would probably be willing to agree with parts of this diagnosis. In his sweet reasonableness, he is quite prepared to concede that all is not well in the house of labor, but he consoles himself (and presumably his readers) by suggesting that things are bound to change once a new wave of young, idealistic militants enters the scene and transforms the labor movement in its image. But will such new militants really flock to the labor movement? And why should they?

The analogy Tyler draws between the 30's and the 60's is a thoroughly misleading one. In the 30's, labor created a new movement and thus released the wellsprings of idealism in the young, who came to play a decisive role in its ranks. In the 60's, however, labor is, by and large, a huge and bureaucratically organized institution that is manned by organization men. In recent years, I have had many students who dedicated themselves to the civil-rights movement, the peace movement, and various other causes, but I cannot recall a single student who expressed the desire to join the unions for idealistic reasons. To be sure, some chose to become union lawyers, labor economists, and the like; but they were making expedient decisions not basically different from the decision to work on the other side of the fence.

Tyler admits that today's young militants are not "ideologically prepared for the coming era of American labor," but he puts the blame for this state of affairs on progressive intellectuals, who "have taught negatively. They have not prepared their students for life." Nonsense. The young do not ignore the labor movement because—as Tyler claims—"leftist critics . . . have turned their alienation into a way of thought which they have passed on to a younger generation," but because there is precious little that is appealing in the present state of the unions. In those rare recent instances where a non-bureaucratic and idealistic union leadership has engaged in a worthwhile battle for simple justice, and appealed for help—as was the case in the organizing movements among California grape pickers and other agricultural workers—the response from the young has been instantaneous.

Mr. Tyler refrains from talking about foreign policy; there is only one entry under Vietnam in the index. Yet it is impossible to bypass the plain fact that the young militants of today are deeply concerned about the imperialist drift of American foreign policy, in marked contrast to labor's statesmen (with the partial exception of Walter Reuther). The leadership of the AFL-CIO has unanimously endorsed every move of Johnson, Rusk, and McNamara on the foreign scene. Mr. Tyler must understand that with such leadership, all appeals from labor to idealistic youth are bound to remain nothing but whistling in the dark. So long as labor's statesmen trade their acceptance of the administration's Vietnam policies for an increase in minimum wages, so long as they betray the traditional autonomy of the union movement by going all the way with LBJ, they will fail to tap the hidden reservoirs of devotion and idealism among the young.

The New York *Times* recently reported that George Meany, while spending a month in Florida, "dropped in" at a cocktail party given for some labor leaders by the First National City Bank of New York. This was at the very time

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that his associate, A. Philip Randolph, the Negro union leader, was trying to get union organizations to remove their deposits from this bank, which is helping to finance South African apartheid. It is incidents of this kind, rather than a conspiracy of their teachers, which have alienated the young from the house of labor.

Mr. Tyler is clearly a good man, and I share many of his hopes and desires. But if he really wishes to reach the young, as well as older professionals and intellectuals, he had better discard his rose-colored spectacles and his apologetic stance and recognize that the unions to which he has dedicated his life are in a very bad way indeed.

LITERARY VANGUARD

NEW DIRECTIONS 19. Edited by J. LAUGHLIN. *New Directions. 313 pp. $6.00.*

Reviewed by GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

IN 1936, James Laughlin published the first *New Directions in Prose and Poetry*, half magazine, half anthology of avant-garde literary and intellectual trends. For the next decade it appeared "at intervals of roughly a year." In 1947 came *Spearhead*, whose "pleasant purpose," Laughlin wrote in the introduction, "is to commemorate, and celebrate, the first ten years' activity of New Directions by reprinting some of the best work that was published in the annual volumes." In 1957, the sixteenth collection was published. In the ten years since then, there have appeared only three more. In the early volumes, many of the writers were young, a great deal of the material printed was original, and there were manifesto-like introductions. In *New Directions 19* (published in 1966), more of the living writers are over sixty-five than under thirty-five, nearly everything is reprinted, and there is no introduction. As for the formal innovation which is supposed to characterize the avant-garde, if there is any here, it was performed by Rafael Alberti, a Spaniard, in the late 1920's (in "Concerning the Angels," a sequence of poems translated and with a scholarly

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introduction by Geoffrey Connell, an Englishman). In this collection, the most celebrated of the American writers young enough to have what one can hope will be a substantial future is Denise Levertov: she was born in England, she is one of the heirs of William Carlos Williams (who is also here, posthumously, as co-translator of some classical Chinese poems), and the first two lines of her poem, "A Lamentation," read:

Grief, have I denied thee?
Grief, I have denied thee.

"The avant-garde" in this country put on the airs of a movement for a while, but now it is just another school, with practiced stances. With *New Directions 19,* the term itself demonstrably becomes useful only to literary history, like "imagism" or "the proletarian novel."

This is not to say that the quality of the writing in this collection is lower than it was in the earlier, more belligerent ones. Much of the poetry is excellent, Günther Anders's reflections on the moral consequences of modern weaponry are superb (and in lucid expository prose), Edward Dahlberg's prose is as wonderful as it has been for the past thirty or forty years, and the bad stuff is no worse than formerly (how could it be?). Nor is it just that these are good or bad in the same old way. The weariness of this volume comes in large part from stale expectations stalely frustrated. If you read "A Lamentation" just because you feel like reading a poem expressing a universal human emotion honestly and artfully, you may well be pleased. If you read it looking for a new direction, hoping it will "extend the frontiers of literary method and content," you will certainly be disappointed.

For thirty years James Laughlin has done more for contemporary American writing than any other publisher. He has done this not by publishing more first-rate books by American and foreign writers, though he has done well even in that competition, but by publishing writers who *at that time* would have had difficulty getting published anywhere else, if at all. How important this has been, and is, to the general literary community can hardly be overestimated. For a long time New Directions has been to commercial and scholarly publishers what little magazines are to commercial and scholarly magazines—an unreliable, crotchety, arrogant, tiresome, cantankerous cause of hope, resource against abandoning the whole project of literature to wolves and moths. There never was much of an avant-garde in America, and there is none now; but a good many valuable writers clustered around that banner because Laughlin raised it (and would publish them). New Directions Books might just as well, at this point, become The Laughlin Publishing Company. Nevertheless, except for literary pornographers, who have Grove Press, Laughlin is needed as much today as he was when he started and for the same fundamental reason—not the avant-gardiste reason he believed in, but in order to put out books and writers that might not get published *now, now,* when the raw need for recognition, a bare chance even, is hot upon them.

THE VERY FACT that the avant-garde has receded into history casts doubt on its validity in the first place, not just here but in Europe as well. For it claimed to be endlessly experimental, revitalizing, new. That it has become one tradition among several makes one ask what merit there was to that grand claim ever. A corollary to this question is to ask what merit there may be in the now-orthodox intellectual judgment that the rebellious avant-garde from Baudelaire and Flaubert to Joyce and Pound is the dominant, the only significant, tradition of the past century and that a writer, if he is to amount to anything, must Make It New; but to reach into this question, which tangles into the whole matter of attitude toward rebellion and society, is too much for this essay. Here, I will confine myself to suggesting two important reasons why the literary avant-garde has died.

The first reason is a change in the attitude of society toward art and artists. For whatever complex of reasons, a significant portion of society now treats the "avant-garde" with an admiration that matches its

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former hostility. It is hard to be the bristling vanguard of a crusading rebellion against an adversary who greets you with foundation grants in one hand and professorships in the other, or, if you don't like those, with lecture tours and jobs in the BBC, or, if you are intransigent enough to reject the whole caboodle, with spreads in fashionable magazines about your intransigence. "Advance guard" is a military metaphor: where's the war? (Even in Russia it is cooling down: Sinyavsky and Daniel were given prison terms, not executed.)

The other reason is that formal experimentation has pretty well exhausted itself. Poetry has been torn apart and put back together again several times in the past half century. After Robbe-Grillet and Burroughs, why bother to tear fiction apart again? After Beckett, what is there to do but admit that the blind-alley situation is well in hand? (The pornographers are still hard at work; someone should tell them that Sade explored and mapped that swamp nearly two centuries ago, definitively.) Originally, avant-garde artists performed their formal "experiments" because they had something to say which they believed could not be said in old forms. Now they do it partly because it is always fun to play with forms and an old form which has lost its vitality needs replacing; but they also do it in part because they accept uninspected the notion that to speak to Our Time they must Make It New, fearing as they do to be called quaint, out of date, "19th-century." "Experimental" is a scientific metaphor: what's scientific about art? (Except for cinema, which is currently the most flourishing art: it really is new, its formal possibilities are by no means exhausted, and science and art together brought it into being.)

War against "bourgeois" values (don't ask too closely what "bourgeois" means here) and formal experimentalism—these are the defining characteristics of the avant-garde. Behind them both, invisible but potent, is a root error, faith in Progress, in the belief that society and art are both capable of limitless and progressive improvement. Science really could and did progress, and so extensive became the faith in the power of science that both the radical artists and the bourgeoisie they despised dreamed the same dream of Progress, but progress in all things, even in social and moral affairs, even, God help us, in art. The dream looks so pretty while you're in it that you realize it was a deceitful nightmare only when you wake up in a cold sweat—if you're lucky, that is, and don't wake up crazy. Since the World Wars, anyone with imagination enough to be a good writer would need such massive shots of some stupefying dope, in order to dream the dream of Progress at all, that his imagination would no longer be available for his art.

Well, nobody won that war the avant-garde was engaged in against the bourgeoisie; the opponents were schismatics of the same false Church of Science and Progress, and the faith has faded. But at least those radical literary "experiments" bequeathed some valuable techniques to writers who

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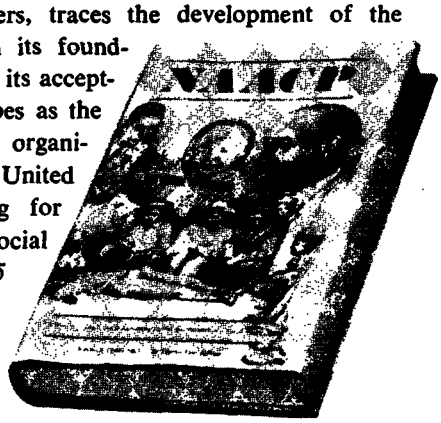

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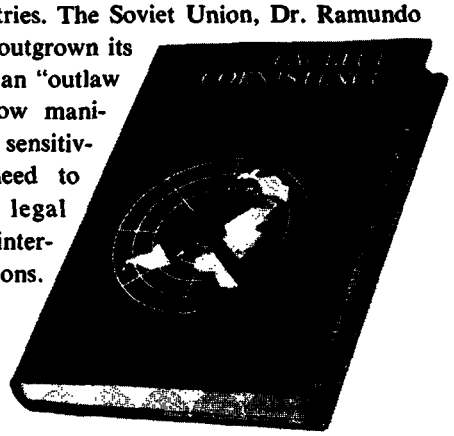

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accept unrevolutionary and unprogressive limitations—as Mann did, for instance, and Frost and Chekhov, that older and still enduring tradition of those who do not aim to assault and improve society, change you right now and the world before long, but who occupy themselves with delighting an audience and also figuring forth a truth or two for whoever wants his understanding enlarged, with telling tales, counting meters, providing intelligible motives for entrances, for exits.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

DAN JACOBSON, *the well-known English novelist, is a frequent contributor to these pages.*

MYRON RUSH, *who teaches government at Cornell, reviewed Edward Crankshaw's* Khrushchev *in our October 1966 issue.*

GEORGE LICHTHEIM *is a contributing editor of* COMMENTARY.

LEWIS A. COSER *is professor of sociology at Brandeis and an editor of* Dissent.

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT'S *most recent novel is* In the World. *Mr. Elliott contributed "The Achievement of Noah Greenberg" to the July 1966* COMMENTARY.

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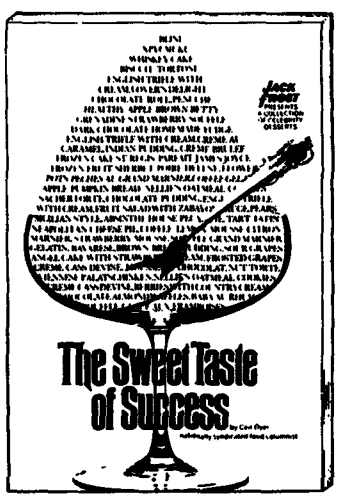

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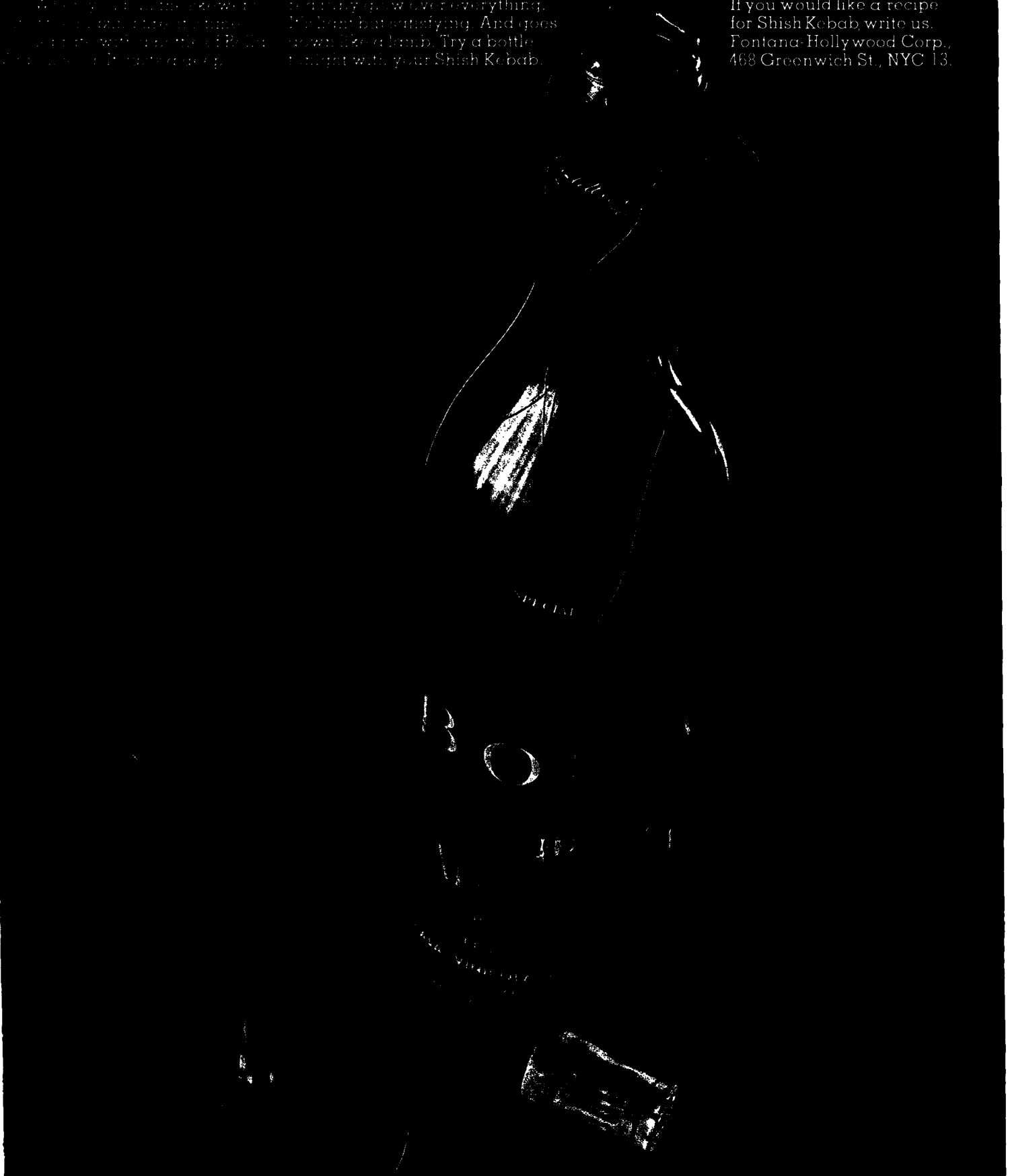

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